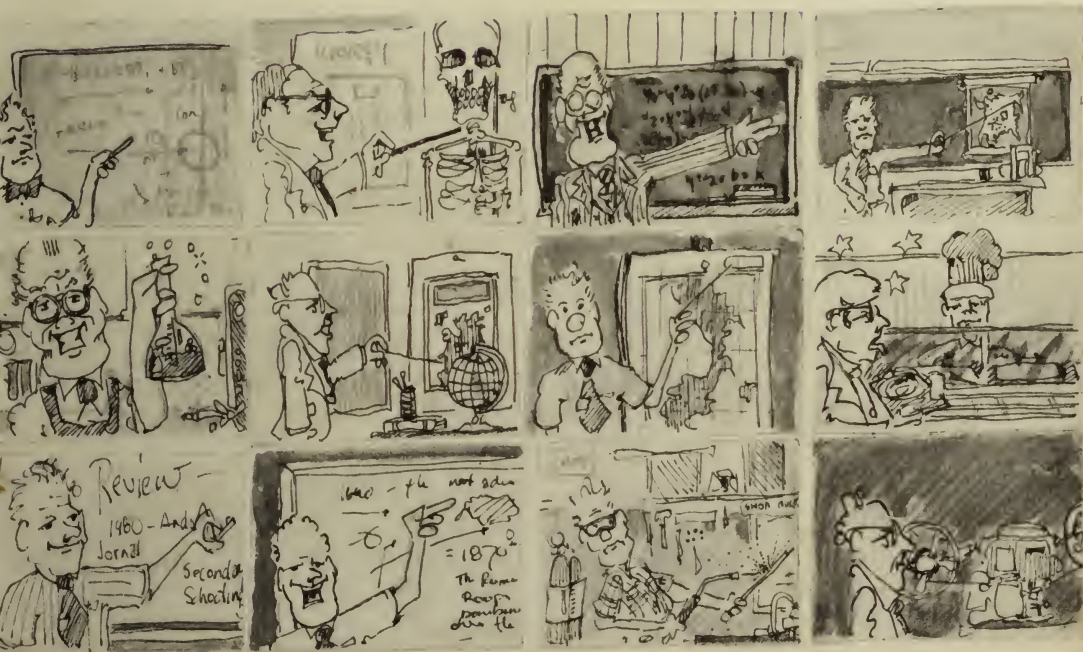


The Andover Review

A JOURNAL FOR SECONDARY EDUCATION



Spring 1980

Strategies of Teaching

AS VINCENT PASCUCCI points out in *A Caesar Salad* (p. 49), strategy is not the usual word to be applied to teaching: its meaning by derivation is "leading armies." Perhaps the implications of warfare and the way one hopes to accomplish success in war are not far from the mark when applied to the teacher as he faces his classes within a variety of schools. The analogy is not worth pursuing beyond this point. Certainly the teacher is, or ought to be, a leader, but the question who is the enemy and who the allies takes one down roads best not followed. In considering a theme for the issue, we began with the word *craft*, a safer but less provocative concept. We ended with *strategy* and are pleased with the results that it solicited.

We asked our contributors to consider a variety of questions. What is the effect of the school environment on both student and teacher? How does the background of the students affect the teaching of those students? Is there a craft of teaching, or is teaching the extension of the personality and proclivities of the individual teacher interacting with a particular group of students? What should be the relationship between imparting a body of knowledge and developing skills, basic or otherwise? Is the great teacher a myth? Indeed, what are the myths of teaching? Our contributors did not answer all of these questions, and they raised some of their own. We hope that these articles will be of value to those who teach, those who are taught and all who are concerned about both, which should include just about every one.

Our consideration of strategies of teaching leads naturally to an inquiry into what is taught — the curriculum. If there is to be another issue of *The Review*, we will pose these questions. What is taught in schools of various kinds (preparatory, comprehensive, alternative)? Who determines what is taught? What should be taught?

The Editors

THE REVIEW invites articles, poetry and graphics from all quarters and will select material with concern for secondary education. If mailed, graphic work should be insured by the sender. It will be returned in due course in the same manner.

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I Walk a Country Mile

Another School

WILLIAM H. BROWN

At six o'clock the radio comes on with the prediction of freezing temperatures, some sun, the latter not yet evident. I get up, shake the fires, eat a quick breakfast and am off in a complaining VW Beetle. At the Chocolate Church, the Performing Arts Center at Bath, I pick up two students — a juggler-mime and a student pianist, both from Camden. They have found rooms with two other young people in a run down house in Bath. We make our way across the Carleton Bridge against the flow of traffic into the Bath Iron Works, take a right to Arrowsic, an island which is the oldest township in Maine, population 235 but growing. Half way down the island in front of a new solar-heated house we pick up two more students. The bug now bulging, we move on to Georgetown, turn left on the road to Robinhood. Opposite the old meeting house, we turn off and park the car in an abandoned apple orchard and prepare to walk the approximate mile of wood road that gives the school its name — the Country Mile. Somewhere along the Robinhood road we may have jammed in another student, a girl from Warren who lives in a trailer belonging to a student who has returned to the school from the army to get his high school certificate.

By this time a pale winter sun has pushed up. We walk through the woods past frozen waterfalls. To the left is Ed's pond, named for Ed Cleary, the ruins of whose house sit at the head of the pond near the school. Some of the students skate to school from time to time. Conversation is sparse but amiable. Eventually we turn a corner and look up at the school, silhouetted against the low sun. It is a converted barn attached to an old farm house by a new but not yet completed building which will be both an art studio and a workshop when it is completed. Smoke rises from the chimneys, an indication that Peter Farrow, founder and headmaster of the school, has been up at least by five o'clock, stoking fires, working on the studio, chopping wood or working on his writing and drawing. We make a rush to the salamander heater. By quarter of eight the yellow submarine arrives from Five Islands, a 1977 Suburu with three students, and possibly the Kentucky connection, twin boys of twelve and a girl of fifteen whose family is renting a farm house on Arrowsic. Peter comes in from wherever he has been; we are assembled. With a quick exchange of remarks, mostly scurrilous, the day begins.

The first class is called Grammar. It comprises the whole school — fourteen students when they are all there, ranging in age from twelve to twenty. For forty-five minutes we examine and analyze sentences written by members of the class or taken from other sources. For each day students write observations which start by making clear some sight, sound, feeling, even taste and attempt to draw an abstraction from it, move toward an idea implicit in the observation. This move toward the abstract raises questions of development, of paragraphing. The grammar itself is generative with a healthy dose of naming the parts. At the end of class each student hands in his observation. Before I leave, I read and comment on these and, when possible, discuss them with the student.

In the second period I teach something called history and literature to the older students. We have elected the period between World War I and World War II in an attempt to show how works comment on the times in which they are written and in turn are produced by those times. We have read Hemingway's *In Our*

Time and Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*. We are currently tackling Agee's *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*. We have come up with the abstractions of innocence and experience, materialism and idealism, conspicuous consumption, wealth and poverty, the East and the Midwest. I hope to consider some parts of Dos Passos' *USA*. In the distant future there is *The Odyssey*, in which we will try to do the same thing for Ancient Greece. In the third period I take those who had other classes the second period and do the same thing with variations suggested by the different students.

The faculty consists of Stefani Burke, who lives in a small house next to the school. A concert musician, she teaches at Bowdoin and Bates. At the Country Mile she teaches English to the younger students and all the mathematics in addition to keeping track of records of credits, class schedules and such matters. Billie Todd, graduate of Smith, prime mover of the Georgetown Historical Society, possessor of a beautiful singing voice, teaches Spanish, French and Earth Science, which includes the earth we live on, the ocean and the sky and all that inhabit these but is firmly anchored to Georgetown, Maine. Peter Farrow keeps it all going, deals with disciplinary problems that may arise, teaches government, history, all forms of art as well as anything else that needs doing. There is also a man known as Starky, who teaches calligraphy on Thursday afternoons.

Classes are held in the converted barn which has a large partially partitioned room downstairs and another room and studio on the second floor. The lack of electricity presents a problem on a grey winter day. Since I have everyone at quarter of eight, I take the top floor, which has the most light, hoping that some of the heat from the salamander will reach there before the hour is up. After that we all take our chances. There is no such thing as sitting in a classroom and waiting for a class to begin. You round up your students and look for a warm or light spot that will suit whatever number you have. And it is not always easy to round them up. Peter has a way of putting them to work, gathering wood, shingling the new studio, working on the road after a heavy rain. This is not work in accordance to any educational theory but work which must be done if

the school is to survive. Sometimes a student or two will have wandered off to the pond or the cove on a rare bright and sunny day.

When school opened in September, it took one morning to get organized. We all gathered and were introduced, students and faculty alike, by our first names. From that day I was addressed as Bill, or for some unknown reason, as Owl by the twelve-year-old twins. Sir is not in the vocabulary. Each student in consultation with Stefani made out his or her schedule. There is no division into grades; a student works at the level he has reached even at times, as in grammar, the languages and earth science, within the same class. What this means is that both inside class and out of it there is a good deal of individual teaching. In the best of circumstances it also results in advanced students taking responsibility for the less advanced. There is the opportunity, not always realized, of student teaching student.

From the beginning the students were puzzled by my presence. They wondered why I would leave a fancy prep school like Andover to come and teach in a small struggling school in the Maine woods. From time to time I wonder myself. Why should I take advantage of an early retirement to leave a school where for forty-one years I had happily taught, coached, edited, whatnot in what must seem ideal circumstances: apparently unlimited resources of money and facilities, housing which I will never be able to afford, a highly selected student body which either through its own wealth or an expansive scholarship program lacked for nothing, conveniently near Boston and Cambridge, where there were culture and entertainment for the asking? Why leave this comparative luxury to maintain my own house in this bitter climate, to walk that country mile to a school of fourteen students struggling to exist, whose continued existence depends on the labor, determination and idealism of one man? Nevertheless I am grateful that the generous retirement policy of Andover has made it possible for me to embark on what has been to date the most exciting and challenging experience of my life in education.

Ironically the very lack of resources, even of amenities, makes possible secondary education in its purest sense. There are no

bells, no curriculum, no departments or department chairmen, no athletic complex, no faculty meetings, no committees, no debates over faculty-student relations, no rules, no discipline, no headmaster or trustees. Peter wryly remarks as he brings around the coffee at ten, our only luxury, that he is not the headmaster but the janitor. In other words there is nothing to get in the way of education itself; school has all but disappeared. In its place there is a situation in which student faces teacher and teacher faces student, no barriers, no place to hide. There is nothing self-conscious, mannered or cute in the first-name address, simply a reflection of a common endeavor in an area where we all have our doubts and even suspicions. Under these circumstances the teacher lives with his foolishness and mistakes; he can not retreat to the syllabus, the department. His mind, character and convictions are there for all to see. His failures are his own and so, I might add, are his successes if such there be. The same is true for the student. One day I observed unoriginally in what I thought the right context that the unexamined life was not worth living. A student took me up on it. "My life," he said, "is unexamined and it's damned well worth living." We had the basis for a discussion. On another occasion I was berating a student for late and unsatisfactory work. The trouble with me, she said, is that I am sixteen. What followed was a startlingly frank conversation on what it meant to be sixteen.

During my last years at Andover I became increasingly concerned with the development of the adolescent in education and the part that reasoning, modes of reason, plays in that development. The freedom of the Country Mile has given me the opportunity to put theory to practice. I have come to realize that little in education and life itself is rational, reasoned, that thinking and the rational discourse that results from it are not only difficult but distasteful. When we were discussing the third chapter of *The Great Gatsby*, a student said that it was nothing but soap opera. My reply was that the statement demanded a definition of *soap opera* and an examination of the basis and validity of the judgment implied. The response of the class was Bill, you've got to be kidding. Soap opera is soap opera and the judgment was that the

third chapter was sappy. Anyone could see that. I persisted in my demand. We became angry, frustrated and resentful but in the end more aware of how we think or do not think. The awareness is what I have consistently struggled for. I have pounded away at the concrete and the abstract, the relationship between the two and how you get from one to the other and back again. I have pointed out the necessity for evidence to support a conclusion and for knowing when the evidence is insufficient to support the conclusion. As an all important extension, I have dwelt on the conclusion as judgment, the factual support for that judgment and the moral implications of the judgment. We have taken up the direction of definition and, as noted, the recognition of the necessity for definition. We have yet to tackle such things as syllogistic reasoning, the handling of ambiguity, the possible meaning of tone, of sequence and pattern. The idea here is not to master any one, two or three modes but to be aware of their existence in the writers being studied and in the thinking of both student and teacher. This awareness is far more important than the books read or the subject matter of the course.

The point I wish to make is that the strategy, if it can be called that, comes naturally at the Country Mile in a way that it did not at Andover. The close relations of students and teachers, the flexibility and freedom which characterize the school, lack of social and cultural distractions (or perhaps a different set of them) all help to make this so. But what really seems to be the determining factor is the attitude of the students. They are not disposed to play the game that goes on at Andover and other success-oriented schools. Some will go on to college, some will not, but they are not motivated by the record. They do not study or perform to score points for college acceptance, or faculty or peer acceptance. They have chosen to come to school in the face of the hostility of the local community or they have come from other towns, found themselves rooms in and around Bath, gotten jobs to support themselves and ways to get to and from school. They have not done all this to play games. If they do not understand or do not accept what a teacher is doing, they let him know, sometimes brutally.

This morning I was introducing *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*. I was reading to the class Agee's explanation of his method, in which he suggests that the reader of his book should read as he would listen to a Beethoven symphony by turning up the volume to its highest point and lying down on the floor with his ear pressed against the speaker until he becomes a part of those savage sounds, not sitting back smoking and talking, saying what a beautiful piece of art the music is. I was interrupted in my exposition of all this by a remark that the man was an asshole. Didn't he know that you could ruin your ears that way.

Earlier in the class I had noted that Agee referred to honest journalism as a paradox. No one knew what a paradox was. Not surprising. What *was* surprising to me was that no one pretended to know or really cared to know until I insisted that we talk about it. While we were at it, we had a go at journalism (a problem of definition).

I must confess that an experience such as this makes me from time to time a bit wistful for the Andover classroom, where all I would have to do would be to toss out the word *paradox* on the round table and the class would bounce it around like a beach ball. Somebody would have remembered the term from a previous class; somebody else would have had it in a vocabulary drill; few if any would admit ignorance or dare to voice indifference. Certainly no one would permit himself to use the Anglo Saxon inelegance of my student's condemnation of Agee.

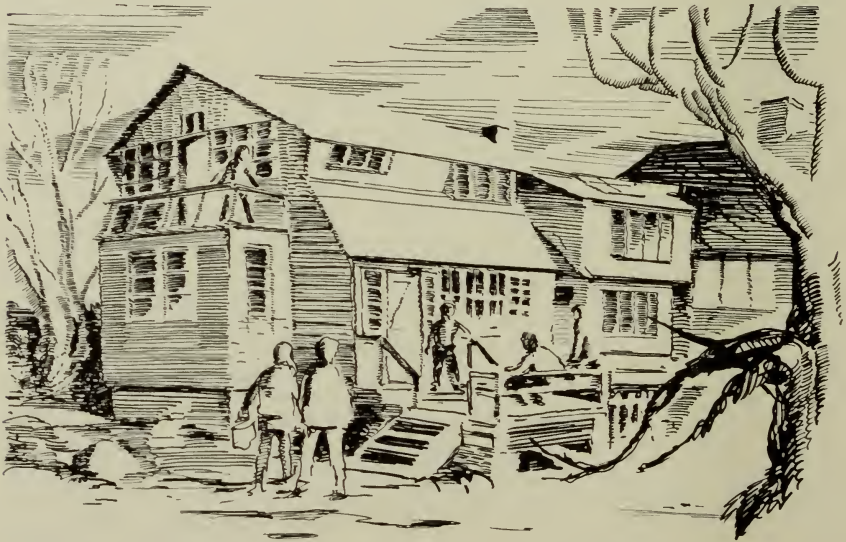
Though I have made my choice, I make no invidious comparisons here. I am content to point at differences. Games are stimulating, exciting, even educational. What is more they pay off in test scores and college admission. But I have never been sure of the substance below them. Take away the games and you are left with the stark unmalleable substance that resists molding. Trying to mold it, to make the essentially irrational rational is tiring, often frustrating, work. But, when I can make a dent or, better still, can begin to see a mold taking shape and development, I have a sense of accomplishment.

I would like to say a further word about the students at Country

Mile. There are eight males and six females. Five of these, one boy, four girls, have come to school because of the art concentration offered this year. In addition to art they are taking a full high school academic course. They must find a place to live, a way to eat, a ride to and from school and a job to defray their living expenses. The modest tuition is paid by the parents. There are three refugees from Louisville, living with their mother in a rented house in Arrowsic. Their tuitions are paid by the town, which has neither junior high school nor high school. Two, also from Arrowsic, live with their mother in a solar wood-heated house which the family built themselves. Three come from Georgetown. Two are brothers, sons of a fisherman in Five Islands; the other from a family recently moved permanently from Massachusetts. One of the students from outside the area has finished high school at Cape May but has never been in a class under forty, never had a chance to discuss her reading or writing. A fourth local student was in the army last year but has joined the reserves this year to gain a high school certificate. They have varying goals. One wants to be a mime, a clown, an entertainer; another would go to the maritime academy. Several would go to liberal arts colleges. Some are too young to know where they are going. A few are drifting without direction. As a group they are able, a few exceptionally so. They have their share of dyslexic tendencies. They alternately work hard and neglect their work in the same proportion as students of my experience. What sets them apart is that they are all at the Country Mile because they have chosen it as an alternative to something much more convenient — a local high school with guaranteed bus transportation. With remarkable cheerfulness and good will they put up with the dramatic inconveniences and my insistence that they attempt the rational. Sometimes the inconveniences and the insistence is too much and a student throws in the sponge and returns to the comfortable home and the mediocre treadmill of the local high school. Those that stick it out do so because they are remarkably on their own. They have a stake in their own education and, at the same time, there are able and devoted teachers individually available. They have a head-

master who knows what it is to educate one's self, who is bold, daring, caring and not afraid of his own vulnerability.

It is not a school for every student or for every teacher. If the school reached thirty students, it would become something different from and less than what it is now. There are few faculty who can afford to teach for what the school can afford to pay. This is not an ideal school. It is no idyll, no escape, especially at this snowless, cold midwinter writing. When I look around for a chair with four legs and clear away art debris in an effort to find a relatively warm and light place to teach or read papers, when I hear loud, crude, abusive language bouncing off the walls, when I look around for a student and find that for an inexplicable reason he is not there, I know that I am in no Shangri La. It is, however, a school that says something in this time of confusion and doubt in secondary education. And I am grateful that at this stage of my life, retired but curious, I have a chance to be a part of that statement.



PETER FARROW

A WALK THROUGH THE SCHOOL OF THE MIND

If you change the structure, you change the structure.
A school is either convex or concave,
public or private, black or white,
a logic one or a logic zero.

Yesterday I walked through a school that glowed
of old polish. Walls crumbled but stood,
not only because someone polished, but because,
it is easy to suppose, someone cared.

Last night I walked through the empty corridors
of another school that supposed someone cared,
although no one did. Walls cracked, right
down to the foundations; that familiar smell

Of high school came back down along
the endless banks of lockers. Floors not quite
scrubbed clean, and a corridor with a clock
hiding behind every teacher's door.

* * * *

Two art teachers are selling snowballs
at a stand. There has been no snow this winter,
and business is good. Nice round snowballs
attract customers in a school. One of
the teachers warns me as I walk by.

* * * *

In the school of the mind surfaces are smooth,
reflective of childhood. The snowman sits on
the snowless field. Under all there is order,
reflected in a thousand graffiti, on a thousand
surfaces. If the foundation is cracked,
the building will fall; the snowman
will disappear under the wall.
When the time comes, you will know.

MARK SCHORR

Beyond Classroom Strategies

DAVID MESIROW

Most public school teachers pour energy and effort into answering the tactical question of how to teach their chosen or assigned subjects. We are confined to this sub-strategy of teaching, while the fundamental strategic question, “what is worth teaching?”, is rarely decided by teachers. We certainly reflect on the issue, but we seldom have the opportunity first to decide the strategy and then to implement it in our particular setting.

A personal experience will illustrate this dilemma. When I entered public school teaching some twenty years ago, my assignment had been drafted by the department chairman and the curriculum vice-principal. The initial strategic questions had already been determined by state standards for graduation, school board policy, traditional practices and the economics of the local educational district. The conditions — 175 students per day in five classes, length of the class periods, arrangement of the schedule, materials available, grouping of the students by year in school or by ability or by sex, etc. — left me with the narrower tactical questions of day to day survival rather than strategic questions. I was supposed to be, and was, a trained, technical problem solver within a subject matter discipline rather than a curriculum planner or director.

In those early years I wrestled with what was worth teaching only in the subject area I was trained for; there was little impetus to go beyond. My reading of the literature concerning public schools confirmed that, except for a few isolated circumstances

scattered around the country, teachers did not have an influential voice in the matters of major strategy. Teachers regularly confronted a pre-defined set of conditions in an institutional setting which had not changed for decades. Beyond, or perhaps because of, political and economic conditions, there was an enormous bureaucratic inertia in the public schools that prevented fundamental considerations of curriculum and organization from being undertaken by teachers.

The strategic questions that deal with the totality of the curriculum, its function and purpose, and — most importantly — the design to deliver the curriculum were regarded as ‘given’, left unexamined and unchallenged by most teachers; we were pre-occupied with classroom planning.

The operating strategy of public education over the years has assumed that either 1) life is really fragmented into discrete areas for which learning by subject matter (areas) successfully prepares our children, or 2) students, through serendipity, will integrate all the information, ideas, skills and procedures with which we send them off. Few, if any, teachers are assigned the responsibility to assist students in a systematic synthesis of their knowledge and skills into a coherent education. In fact, current trends in the preparation and licensing of teachers perpetuate and extend the fragmentation of knowledge and inhibit both the ability of and opportunity for the teacher to make basic strategic decisions. The fragmentation is irrational. Traditional organization of high schools by departments continues to allow the response, “This is social studies, not math, not English, not”, as if life and learning are so neatly divisible.

To the present “Back to Basics” clarion call, what seems to emerge from most school responses is not a strategy that deals with the substance of the curriculum, but one that re-emphasizes only the traditional response. This response, that we must return to the ‘tried and true’ practices of some bygone era, must be viewed with some skepticism if only because the ‘drop-out’ percentages from these practices were so high. What we have is a continuation of organizational patterns that have existed for many decades, with a

renewed rhetoric about behavioral discipline. This is hardly 'the basics'. If 'the basics' are the operational skills needed adequately to function in life beyond school, do all teachers engage in teaching all of them? If math is 'basic', do we all use it and teach it, especially to identify its varied and important application to understanding our lives? If we don't, why is it 'basic'?

Not only does the institution's bureaucratic pattern fragment knowledge to a level of severe distortion, but it works to fragment and isolate teachers. We are all familiar with the comparison of school design and egg crates (or prisons or warehouses), of class schedules and teaching loads that allow only the briefest and most perfunctory exchanges between teachers. There are only rare opportunities to share our skills as craftspeople and even rarer circumstances to reflect on the fundamental strategic considerations of the system's structure and purpose.

All this militates against the other purpose of the schools: that students readily integrate themselves into the life beyond school. What this requires is more than simple skill acquisition, development and refinement. It requires the strategic planning that will insure that students perceive themselves to be wanted and to belong, to be competent and to be useful. This is the mission beyond 'basics', or at least coincident with it. I recoil from a mindless commentary that states that the real purpose of school is to teach children how to cope with failure. What they need to cope with is success; failure is all too abundant, too easy, too self-evident.

My accumulated experience and frustration with school led me to join with several colleagues to approach our teaching from a far different perspective from the one with which my career began. The creation of a new inner-city, public high school ten years ago provided us with a rare opportunity to discuss and decide some of the major strategic questions of schooling. We asked ourselves and found answers to what was worth teaching. We also addressed the equally important consideration of organizational structure of the school. Our experience led us to the conclusion that this organizational question may be the most

important key to teaching knowledge and skills and to developing positive, worthy self-images in students. Beyond the clichés of 'small is beautiful' and 'operating on a human scale', we found substantial evidence to support these notions in our alternative to a departmental configuration. We established a set of mini-schools within a high school. Each was made up of six teachers from a variety of subject matter fields and 150 students from all grade levels. We were committed to developing a coherent interdisciplinary curriculum that taught 'the basics' and synthesized the information, issues and ideas that bombarded the lives of students. Six teachers, working directly together, could rapidly come to know all their students, their schedules, their progress; the size made it possible for human contact on a continuous basis. We were able to continue our bureaucratic anomaly for almost a decade at no additional cost to the system. But in the end our differences from the rest of the city's schools made us vulnerable, first to the inertia of the whole system and its traditions, and second, to fatigue. We found few teachers willing to sustain the energy required continuously to address fundamental strategic questions about curriculum and organization.

Teaching strategy is a complex concept. It is one that operates on several levels. The part that is beyond the classroom is the critical one. We need to go beyond our classrooms and assert ourselves in the larger questions of what is to be done in the public schools. It is imperative that teachers seek opportunities to grapple with the basic questions of the total curriculum and the organization of teaching. Though my recent experiences and perceptions of the future are not promising, I know it is a necessary effort.



KARI MCCABE

Jan's Hands and Drew's Costume

NED RYERSON

I thought that I would not have the energy to go to another faculty meeting and to talk again about what teachers do or don't do, and how it is that students learn or don't learn. But there's more to the job than teaching. There are colleagues, for instance; and when you're working with another person and see the way the face muscles drop because of disappointment or fatigue, you start thinking about something besides teaching.

"Teaching" is something demonstrable. You keep a record of it so you will know what happened in a class and what each student accomplished: attendance, the results of a quiz, questions answered, homework completed. In a faculty meeting we sit around a table and try to find out what there is to remember. We tell each other about students who have learned something and have remembered something, and about students who haven't learned something and so have less to remember. I don't remember French irregular verbs any more, but I do remember a big stick, about the size of an ax handle, that M. Imer struck on the back of my chair to help me remember the principal parts of irregular verbs. He could tell whether or not I was remembering because he stood behind my chair and read what I had written in the verb blanks. I could tell by his breathing whether or not he was going to strike the chair. He had small hands and small feet. It seemed awkward for him to take the step up to the platform where his desk was. When he sat down behind the desk, his feet disappeared, dangling somewhere inside the knee-hole.

His face reminded me of a comic strip character called "Freddy the Boy Artist." Freddy wore a floppy beret and a French artist's smock and a long string tie.

But we did have a faculty meeting, and because Jan was leading it, it was not going to be about how much students had learned to remember, but about a process of teaching that might help them to learn. Jan was a colleague and deserved support, and I wanted to learn about ways of teaching from her. Just the day before, happening to meet a teacher I had worked with years ago and making small talk with him, I noticed the way his mouth moved around as if he were shifting a toothpick with his tongue from one side of his mouth to the other. He held his hands together in front of him piously and said, "I think I learn something every day. I guess when you don't do that any more you might as well quit." I think he was talking about reading, or maybe French irregular verbs.

It was a good meeting that Jan was conducting. She had done a lot of thinking about the kinds of questions that teachers ask — questions that encourage thinking and questions that inhibit thinking — and how students hear different kinds of questions. I was taking notes and thinking about a boy named Drew who had been in our classes. We had asked Drew a lot of questions. And I was thinking about a class I had had that morning, when I was asking questions about a moment of sunrise at sea as it had been described in a story we had read by a man who had seen that particular sunrise happen the year before he wrote the account of his experience. That had been eighty years before we read the story, and now, in Jan's meeting, it was a couple of hours since we had talked about that sunrise. How many sunrises had happened in our own lives that we had forgotten or remembered? I was listening to Jan, looking at my notes about what she was saying, hearing her voice gain energy because she was thinking hard about her own questions and wanting to make her thoughts clear to us. How can we help students to understand different kinds of meaning in what they read? What kinds of questions will help most?

I looked up and saw her hands and arms. They were shaping

meaning in front of her. Her hands bent up at the wrist, turned inward, turned flat, palms up, cradled and cupped an idea that was in front of her, the left hand lifted and turned inward and moved to the side, the right hand made the same gesture. They reached up and came together momentarily, left over right, palms up. They dropped to the table, fingers curled inward, opened and pointed, then joined side by side in clenched but relaxed fists, opened finger by finger, revolved around each other, rested, and turned into motion again. I knew what she meant. It wasn't about teaching or asking questions. It was about being alive, about being glad to be alive and thinking and telling colleagues about what she had learned. All that shaping of space that took place in front of her became a real event, like a sunrise at sea or even a stick struck harshly on the back of a chair. And the space was so beautifully formed and kneaded and drawn that I could keep the memory of her vitality and thoughtfulness. Teaching has a lot to do with memory, and so does learning.

I wanted to ask about the questions we could ask Drew, but I thought there could be no satisfactory answers to enter in our record books. He didn't like much of anything about the school. He was short, cheerfully sullen, and obstinate in a vulnerable way. He didn't like to answer questions, he didn't like to listen or to prepare work that was of no interest to him. He didn't like to arrive when a class began or to wait to leave for a class to be over. He liked to draw. He looked ill cared for. He kept moving about school, or on the outskirts of school — the sidewalk, the parking lot, the back yard, the porch — inside a space of silence, making us see how he was hiding. He seemed to have no trust for anyone outside his own body as if all the rest of the world was something seen through veiled openings or a one-way screen that he held in front of himself like a shield. I think he wanted to contain everything he would need inside a protective shell. He should have known, for his own satisfaction and expression, those slow-moving and intense t'ai chi gestures that thrust out from the space a body inhabits.

Once we had had a crisis conference with him because he was

absent so much, was not doing any homework and seemed to have nothing to say to anyone. We were pushing him hard and fortunately he was able to resist us, but only through his silence. Do you realize how many classes you have missed, Drew? How many times you've been so late to class you might as well have missed it? When will you finish the paper that was due three weeks ago? Have you been sick? Do you have a job now? Do you want to work out an independent studies schedule? His silence made us insistent. The conference became a kind of torture session, conducted by benign interrogators intent on getting a confession: Yes, I am at fault; I have not worked hard enough; I have not done my homework; I have come late and gone too early. We were forcing our way through his shield in order to find someone who would join us in a ritual of surrender and agreement. The friendly office became alien. We were looking at the weaknesses we had exposed: small size, vulnerable stature, near-sighted eyes that filled with tears, awkward motions, headaches, no money. We were sitting in chairs, pressing on the space around him, determined to come to the agreement that we thought was necessary — to make up work, to come to class, to try harder. We believed in him, we said; that is, we believed in the image we had created for ourselves.

"OK, OK," Drew said. Then he quit school. What else could he do to protect himself? He wandered back for an occasional visit. No, he said, he wasn't in school anymore, he was looking for a job. He wanted to make enough money to buy a bus ticket to go across the country and back. He wanted to draw. He came on visits with a silent curiosity, looking around to see what it was like, perhaps glad and perhaps sorry that he had escaped. He sat outside on the porch and talked a little. He sat hunched up with his knees drawn up close to his chest and his head turned up. No, he didn't want to come inside to visit a class. Other students greeted him and made no judgments. Who was he hurting? They did not need to protect him or threaten him with the possibilities that they saw in him. Teachers keep working at the potential inside; we have an investment in potentials; we lay claim to the future.

In the meeting room I saw that Jan's hands were quiet. Fifteen teachers had questions about students and themselves and what they were doing. The doors were closed but the windows were open and warm air and light flowed through them. Each of us had given up something to be there and had agreed to come back the next year. Perhaps we would learn to ask the questions that would help and to avoid the questions that hurt. We stood up and talked some more as if we had all the time that we needed. We were closer and freer because we were standing. The meeting was over.

I biked home in the long-lasting daylight of May. At a busy intersection I heard a muffled voice call my name from across the street, twice, and looked over my left shoulder to see if someone was calling me. A clown-suited, masked and helmeted, goggle-eyed figure waved to me and I waved back. It was red and pink and yellow, baggy pants and sleeves and a round plastic dome on its head, cheerful and unrecognizable. I turned back to learn who it was. A juvenile-sized clown figure advertising hamburgers, standing on the sidewalk, hired to wave at passers-by, its face hidden under the dome-like headpiece. He took it off so I could know who was inside. It was Drew. We felt glad to see each other again. We were both away from school and in other costumes, me on my bike and Drew in his Martian clown outfit. He was not hiding. He was waving through his costume; the mask was smiling; his face was smiling when he took the mask off. I thought that I was seeing all of him. We talked about the job he had. He didn't have enough money yet for the bus trip that he still wanted to take. He was drawing a lot. I saw with a feeling of deep respect that he was safe, and not because he was a clown although he was dressed like one. It seemed neither good nor bad that he was wearing a ridiculous costume and waving inanely to advertise hamburgers. He was a boy, out of school, vulnerable, and exploited by a quick-food, quick-profit business. He put the headpiece back on; probably it was against company orders to take it off. He was still Drew, with his secret. But he had told me that he had one. And I would rather have him tell me that than to try to force from him a humiliated promise to return to school with his homework done. I

wished I had seen him before Jan's meeting so I could have asked my friends and colleagues about him again: is he better off as an exploited juvenile working at a foolish and ill-paid job because he has found no other place for himself and his secrets? I wish I had seen him at the conference when we sat in chairs in the office as clearly as I saw him when we stood outside, in the rush hour traffic, and he took off his mask to show me who he was.

*TEACHING IS EASY MONEY**

First, to impress them with my memory,
I recite ten long poems without stopping —
three are in German, two in Greek, one in Chinese.

Then, to amaze them with my spontaneity,
I run around the room three times,
the last time on my hands.

To astound them with my wit
I do the best routines of Shelley Berman.
When they stop rolling in the aisles

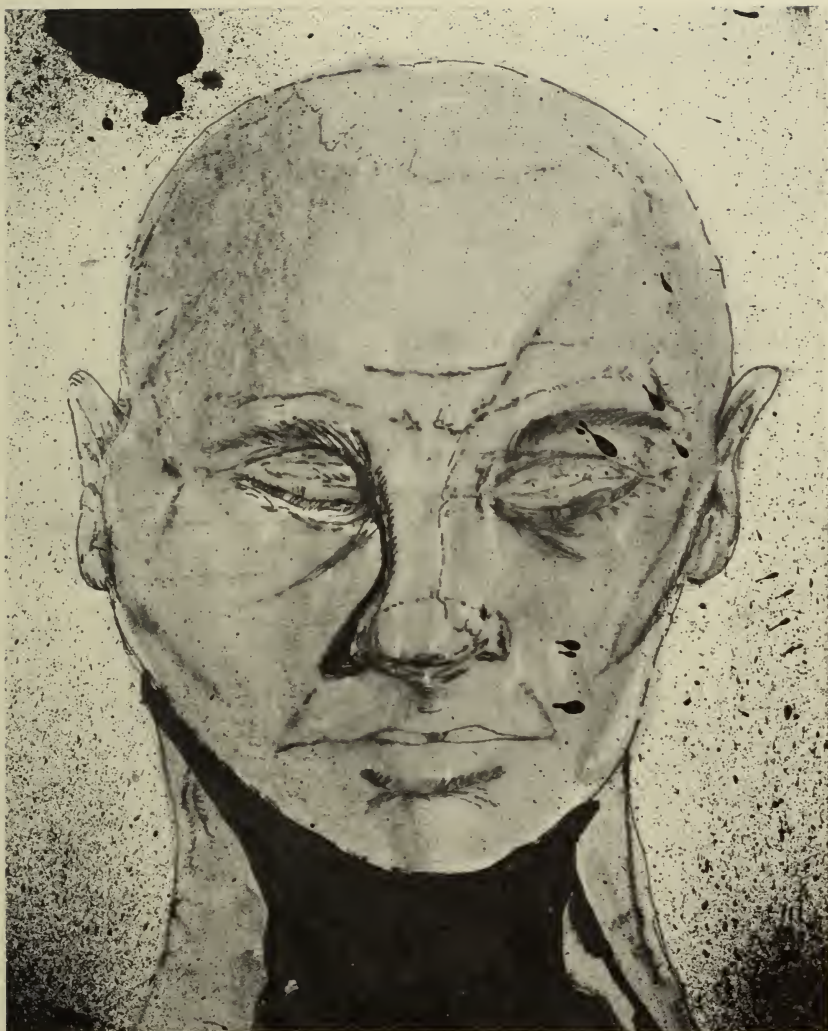
I push out my upper and lower bridgework
and clack it like Punch and Judy —
that's so they'll know I'm not a highbrow.

They leave the room mumbling excitedly.
Next time I'll levitate, with flashing eyes
transfix, transform their puny souls.

After that I can tell them what books to read,
what notebooks to buy; we can begin to talk
about grammar, syntax, the infinite wonder of verb.

MICHAEL LOPES

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ALPHONSO JOHNSON

English and American History Teaching

David Evans, Chairman of the Department of History at Eton College, decided to spend his sabbatical year 1979-80 teaching history at Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts, before returning to Eton as a Housemaster. His prime duty at Andover has been to teach two classloads of the famed and hoary History 35, seen by many alumni, faculty, and students as a sacred cow of the Academy's curriculum.

DAVID EVANS

Last September I embarked on a year of teaching History 35, an American history survey course with a long and rich tradition, to two sections of sixteen- and seventeen-year-olds at Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts. My students wear jeans instead of pin-striped trousers and anoraks instead of tail-coats and half of them are girls, but otherwise they are similar to those I left behind in Eton at the end of the first year of their 'A' level history course. The range of intelligence of Etonians is close to that of Andover students. At Eton, though, any particular class is likely to be more homogeneous in ability, since we believe in setting our students. The different sets in history study the same periods, but the books used, the topics covered and the skills emphasized can be varied to some degree to suit the needs of each class. It has been fascinating to observe the Andover history depart-

ment's approach to the same problems of adapting its courses to the needs of the less able students. Such students are to be identified by means of a diagnostic test and then given a special preliminary course before they start on History 35. P.A. students are not only similar to their Eton contemporaries in intelligence, they are equally cooperative and, for the most part, hardworking. Indeed, the level of attention in class is higher and there is rarely any need for the teacher to check chattering or cheek.

If at first I was tempted to conclude that my American students differed from my English ones only in dress and accent, the arrival of the first set of test answers reminded me that the academic background of the two groups was different. At Eton history is compulsory through the equivalent of 10th grade. 'A' level classes are composed of those who choose to study history as one of their three 'A' level subjects. At Andover history is voluntary through 10th grade and becomes compulsory only for 11th-graders. Consequently, I found that my Andover students had mostly been less well trained than my English ones in such skills as note-taking, picking out the main points in a chapter set for reading, and writing coherent and relevant essay answers. The quality of my students' English prose also left much to be desired, probably because American public schools do not stress accurate and precise writing to the extent that the schools do from which Etonians come. Since students starting on History 35 have so many basic problems to cope with, the goals of the course have inevitably to be limited in scope, especially in the first term. There seems, however, also to be a profound difference of aim which helps to account for the divergence between History 35 and 'A' level.

The stress in History 35 is first on achieving a mastery of a large body of factual information covering American history. In the fall this mastery is tested by a final examination consisting of an essay question worth 50% and multiple choice questions worth 50%. Eton 'A' level students take no multiple choice tests, but they, too, need to know a good deal of factual detail. The difference comes in the use to which this historical evidence is put. At Andover the

typical essay question presents a proposition such as: "The exercise of power by the national government in domestic affairs created constitutional conflicts in America." The student is required to adduce examples that support the proposition and to analyze them in order to show that they do so. In other words, his essay is a little like the geometrical proofs I recall working out: both are proofs of a statement that the student is meant to take as true. When the Andover history department claims to teach the "use of evidence," what is meant is the technique of presenting proof.

By contrast, 'A' level questions set to Etonians call less for proof and more for discussion and evaluation. A characteristic question, such as "Was Napoleon III a liberal?" deliberately offers the student no firm starting point. He will have to discuss what characterized men designated liberals in the 19th century; he will have to examine the liberal and illiberal features of Napoleon's rule and policies; and he will have to attempt a synthesis in which contradictions are accounted for. It is easy enough to say how the student will have to proceed. It is not possible to dictate what he should write, since at every stage evaluations are called for which cannot be labelled right or wrong, though they may be better or worse argued. Another type of question, say "Why was Habsburg dominance in Germany overthrown by Prussia?" is only apparently different from the first type. The starting point, the eclipse of Habsburg power in Germany, is firm enough, but the question deals not with that scarcely disputable point, but with the entirely debatable issue of why it occurred. The less able students will present lists of causes, all duly "proved" by citation of evidence, but what is required is an evaluation of the importance of the different causes and an ultimate synthesis that plausibly shows how the different causes interacted to produce the effect. The question could in fact have been set in a more obviously evaluative form, such as "How important was Prussian 'blood and iron' to the overthrow of Habsburg dominance in Germany?" Again, there is no right answer. Though there are factors that must be discussed in any essay on this topic and

though the answers can be badly or well informed, the emphasis could arguably be placed in many different ways.

The disadvantages of the English stress on the evaluative essay are readily apparent. Some pupils' essays become over-concerned with issues of semantics. Verbal dexterity can sometimes be too highly rewarded. I have known skillful writers to do well despite their ignorance or superficiality of understanding, shortcomings that the demand for careful, thorough analysis of examples at Andover would certainly have exposed. The 'A' level essay may not unmask such students, since it requires reference to rather than description of the facts. Perhaps the grandiose subjects of the type "Was Louis XIV a failure?" even breeds sometimes a kind of arrogance in the students who produce successful answers, together with a distaste and even contempt for detailed historical work.

Yet the English approach seems to me to have its virtues, too. It is surely important to stress literary skills, though not at the expense of historical content. The 'A' level type of essay is more challenging than the type set in History 35 chiefly in that it requires much more thought about how to organize a coherent relevant essay answer. History 35 questions frequently prescribe exactly how the essay is to be set out. Few 'A' level questions give much help. Again, many 'A' level questions are designed to prompt discussion of such historical terms as "liberal," "tyranny," or "revolutionary." Most students shy away from discussion of concepts as they might from an encounter with a dangerous beast, though they are ready to use them, too often with only a vague idea of what they mean. It seems no bad thing to force them to confront such concepts and their changing meaning in an essay question.

Another virtue of the 'A' level question is the scope it offers for originality of argument, presentation, emphasis and synthesis. Not all students, by any means, take advantage of this opportunity, but the abler students need to be able to feel that there is a place for their personal thought. Certainly, some find History 35 stultifying, because it seems to offer too little scope

for the individual student to reach conclusions of his own. Though an unwarrantable arrogance can result, it can be useful to set questions inviting students to criticize the views set out in their textbooks. I do not advocate that they should be taught historiography, but 11th and 12th grade students are not perhaps too young to consider how far certainty can be achieved by historians and how far a subjective element necessarily enters into their judgments. It is surely desirable that students should learn to scrutinize critically rather than credulously accept what they read. The history teacher should assume some responsibility for inculcating this habit of mind. Yet he will surely want his students to be not simply destructively, but also constructively critical and herein lies the value of the critical essay, which forces the student to work out his own overview.

The kind of history questions asked of students in History 35 not only avoids evaluation, but characteristically is narrow in approach. "How did the Dred Scott decision undermine earlier positions on the issue of slavery in the territories?" is a typical question from a fortnightly test. A final exam question is broader in chronological scope, but still tends to be monothematic, concerned, for instance, with examples of conflicts over states rights. I have yet to see a History 35 essay question similar to the 'A' level question I mentioned earlier, "Why was Habsburg dominance in Germany overthrown by Prussia?", in which economic, social, diplomatic, military, personal, political, and even cultural factors might be held to be relevant. It could be argued that any essay answer to so all-embracing a question must be superficial, and yet perhaps a student who attempts it will acquire some understanding of the way in which different factors interact to produce historical change, whilst one who is concerned only with narrower issues may fail to achieve such a comprehension. His view of history may remain too compartmentalized.

The merits of the English approach to the study of history and those of the Andover approach cannot be fully discussed without raising the question: what are students expected to retain from their study of history? On both sides of the Atlantic there is no

doubt a hope that some of the content will be retained, though we all have to resign ourselves to the probability that *Gibbons v. Ogden* or the Good Parliament will soon cease to be more than vaguely familiar labels to nearly all students. At Andover the aim that seems uppermost in most history teachers' minds is the inculcating of certain skills. History 10 and History 20 seem to have been constructed or reconstructed with the question explicitly in view of what skills it is desirable to teach to given age-groups. The recently instituted diagnostic test seeks to establish that students have acquired minimum levels of skill before they proceed to History 35. The reorganization of History 35 now under way seems likely to make the teachers of the course more self-conscious about the skills they are striving to impart. Already, though, the course seems strongly oriented to the development of skills. So the chief aim of the first two terms is that students shall learn to read and note intelligently and should be able to use clearly analyzed evidence to prove given propositions. In the final term they have to apply what they have learnt in a thesis involving extensive use of primary source material, a task which will teach them some of the special problems involved in finding and utilizing that material.

Such interest in the skills of the historian is valuable, even impressive, but there is perhaps a danger in overstressing it. It is exceedingly difficult to identify skills that are unique to the historian's craft. At Andover this difficulty is disguised by the absence of economics, politics, or geography departments, which means that only by the English Department are some of the skills also used by the historian taught. At Eton, where politics, economics and geography flourish, history cannot justify itself on the basis of the skills it teaches alone. Rather, the teacher of 'A' level history would insist that he is trying to get his pupils to understand the historical dimension of man's experience. He tries to get them to appreciate the differentness of the past from the present, that not just the name of the President or King or the type of dress worn was different, but that the whole way of life and thought was different and that in its time it made some sort of

sense. He tries to explain how historical change occurs by the interaction of a great many different factors, rather than just because a leader decides on change. He hopes to suggest something of the limits within which any single individual can affect the course of history and how far policies can be followed and their effects forecast. At 'A' level students have to take a course on part of the history of England. Usually the teacher will be concerned to give some sort of context for those surviving relics of the past that date from the period he is covering; and he will want to examine critically some of the material myths that relate to this period, too, in the hope of stimulating a more critical self-consciousness about inherited myths and stereotypes generally. There can be no possibility of taking the 'A' level student all through the history of England and Europe — two or three centuries only can be managed — and few schools make much effort to cover the 1960's and 1970's to show how the present grew out of the immediate past. The view taken is that the student can learn the kind of way in which historical change occurs and can acquire a greater self-consciousness about national myths whatever period he studies.

The aims I have outlined are not, of course, wholly neglected at Andover. Conversation with other teachers of History 35 convinces me of that, and a work such as Potter's *Division and the Stresses of Reunion*, central to the History 35 reading list, is admirably suited to assist many of the aims I have set out. Yet when the History 35 course is discussed, so often the discussion seems to concern itself wholly with skills. Nor does it seem to me that the kind of essay students are asked to write is best calculated to enable students to understand how history works. The evaluative essay of broad scope seems to me far more likely to prompt them to develop such an understanding.

The argument of this essay is not that the Andover History 35 approach is wrong and the Eton 'A' level type of approach is right. In reality, the two approaches to the teaching of history to 11th and 12th graders are not mutually exclusive. If, in my view, Andover would do well to appreciate the merits of the English

approach, Eton might also learn from Andover. Skills do matter. And above all, the experience that History 35 students get of actually doing some work with primary sources is a valuable feature of the course which is largely lacking in England. Occasionally, Etonians compete for an external prize which may require some original work, or else a student sure of his Oxford scholarship may stay on to study the sources available in Eton College Library. A thesis based on primary sources, however, is not an integral feature of our course. The course does include a specialized study — at present the Causes of the English Civil War — but it involves reading more detailed secondary sources rather than working with primary ones. Study of primary sources is a special kind of experience and generates a special kind of interest that would greatly enrich our 'A' level.

The preoccupation of this essay with the aims of history teaching and the sort of work that should be demanded of history students is not meant to imply a denial of the importance of personality in successful history teaching. The uninspiring teacher who has long ceased to care about his subject or students will not be effective for all his well-articulated aims, whilst a man who has never given much thought to his aims may by force of personality succeed in awakening a historical awareness and interest in the past in his pupils. Personality is uniquely important in a teacher. Yet, however true such an assertion may be, it is also supremely unhelpful. The teacher who strives to be a great personality is in danger of becoming merely an amusing eccentric or a garrulous preacher about everything under the sun. The teacher's personality is usefully expressed only in and through the pursuit of aims relating to the subject taught (though the aims may be taken for granted rather than self-conscious). For what is it that the great teacher's personality achieves? Surely it is above all the communication of an enthusiasm for and a commitment to his discipline that his pupils find infectious. Such enthusiasm and commitment are dependent upon a perception of the worthwhileness of the discipline. Teachers can become better teachers only by a better understanding of the content of their subjects and a fuller appre-

ciation of what it can offer to their students, not by reflection on the need to make themselves great personalities. I suggest that Andover history teachers might be helped towards a fuller realisation of the potentialities of history teaching by reflection on what English history teachers aim for and do. I am certain that Eton history teachers can be assisted towards such a broadening of their vision by learning from what the Andover history department achieves.

ANCESTRAL MEMORIES

Chicken Little was right to be nervous.
 As these large shadows swoop over me
 my bird brain pronounces them hawks.
 Then peeling paint hits the floor.
 Horses shy at shadows the same way.
 Their ancestral memories stir,
 remembering when they were prey.
 Listen! the ceiling is falling
 whispering as it flops down in the middle of the night.

Maybe there was no hail
 when Chicken Little's forebear hens
 were laying and dreaming of Chanticleers —
 I trust some essence of her fears.
 If I in my kitchen start at hawks of paint
 thinking hurried thoughts of where to hide the children —
 why shouldn't she flare her feathers and squawk?
 It's the self she spreads out, enfolding the chicks
 like the knitted chicken tea cozy
 or my great great grandmother Catherine Rutledge
 hiking the children off to church
 under her cloak
 hidden from her orangeman husband.

PAULA BONNELL

Durable Instruction

The Teacher-Centered Classroom

LARRY CUBAN

Teachers seldom watch one another teach. Observers have often remarked on the isolation of professional teachers from one another while they practice their craft. As a secondary teacher who has shuttled back and forth between classroom and administration since 1955, I have had the good fortune to watch many teachers at work in their classrooms. In addition, I have researched certain questions about curriculum and instruction that have puzzled me. One question in particular won't let go of me because my teaching experience and what I have observed as an administrator confirm what I discovered from research: In an institution so vulnerable to change as the public schools are, why does teaching seem invulnerable to reform?

Let me first give some background on how I arrived at the question and then point out what it is that puzzles me.

Three years ago I did some research on how changes in governance, administration and curriculum easily penetrated public schools in the last century. Such reforms as elected school boards that centralized policy-making decisions into small bodies led by a professionally trained superintendent, the introduction of different grade organizations (6-3-3), managerially trained principals and superintendents, vocational education, instructional innovations such as the Dalton Plan, the Activity Method, team teaching, open classrooms, computer-assisted instruction and a host of other reforms aimed at creating a more student-centered classroom — all of these have been documented over the last century.

Anyone reviewing these reforms would marvel at the large number of innovations introduced into schools across the country. When I began to look at what actually went on in classrooms — and very few historians, unfortunately, have investigated what and how teachers have taught — I was struck by how few innovations got into the classroom. Although the evidence I found was sparse and fragmented, I discovered a stubborn continuity in what I will call teacher-centered instruction.

By teacher-centered instruction I mean the common method by which teachers teach to the whole group of students in a class, show high concern for whether or not students are listening to them, concentrate mostly on subject matter and academic skills and, in general, control what is taught, when and under what conditions.

If you were to walk into a classroom where such instruction prevailed, you would probably observe the following:

- far more teacher-talk than student-talk during the class
- most of the teacher's questions call for students reciting factual information
- most instruction occurs with the whole group, not with small groups or individuals
- the teacher decides how the class time will be used by students
- most of the time the teacher relies upon a single textbook for information; film, television, tape-recorders and records will be used much less, if at all
- the physical arrangements in the class consist of rows of desks facing a blackboard with a teacher's desk probably at or near the front of the room

Before any irritation begins to form in the minds of readers who may teach this way, let me say that I am not judging teacher-centered instruction as either effective or ineffective, or comparing it to other approaches. With some variations, this is the way I have taught. What nags at me is the puzzling durability of this approach to teaching at all levels of schooling, decade after decade, in spite of changes in teacher preparation, children's knowledge and skills, and continuous fervor to reform this kind of instruction.

Turn with me now to some of the evidence I uncovered, which I admit is sparse and still largely untapped by historians. I looked at certain periods following intensive reform efforts to install different curricula and instructional methods, beginning in the early years of this century. One of these periods should do to make the point about the steadfastness of teacher-centered instruction.

In the decade spanning the Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson administrations, course content changed, new courses were introduced and old ones disappeared. Textbooks got flashier, softer and more expensive as they embraced eye-catching graphics. New instructional materials produced by national curriculum groups showed up in the classrooms. Innovative instructional tactics such as inquiry learning, team teaching and television dominated professional journals and convention programs and caused spasms of irritation in school boards and superintendents anxious to leap on whatever bandwagon was hurtling by.

Meanwhile, what happened in the classrooms? No comprehensive study has been done that synthesizes the data from observers and participants; what I have found is drawn from a sampling of sources and will be, at best, tentative.

In the early 1970s, university researcher John Goodlad and a team of veteran practitioners observed 150 primary grade classrooms in almost seventy different schools in metropolitan areas of thirteen states.¹ The observers expected to find those highly-publicized innovations in content, classroom organization and instruction that sprang from the reform surge of the 1960s being implemented by teachers. What they found surprised them. "Many of the changes we have believed to be taking place in schooling," they concluded, "have not been getting into classrooms." After a decade and a half of widely-endorsed changes, innovations "were blunted on school and classroom doors." They found that the teacher dominated the classroom talk, questions and decision making. After kindergarten, textbooks controlled the

¹John Goodlad, et al. *Looking Behind the Classroom Door* (Worthington, Ohio: Charles A. Jones Publishing Company, 1974), p. 33.

content and organization of the classroom. They were struck by the "dullness, abstractness and lack of variety in the learning fare." While audiovisual equipment was abundantly present, it was "used rarely during our visits." By the third grade what children studied and where they sat suggested "a passive, immobile pattern" where instruction was "overwhelmingly group-oriented," rather than geared to individual differences. In short, Goodlad and his colleagues got one clear impression from the classrooms they visited: "order, neatness, quietness and immobility" prevailed.²

Journalist Charles Silberman spent four years studying schools in the late 1960s. He and a small staff visited scores of classrooms in different settings around the country. His conclusions mirror Goodlad's, although Silberman's prose is far more critical. His vignettes from the classroom are devastating instances that document his charges of "mindlessness" in schools and tedium in classrooms. He minces no words. If someone visits classrooms, "he will discover that the great bulk of students' time is still devoted to detail, most of which is trivial, much of it factually incorrect and almost all of it unrelated to any concept, structure, cognitive strategy, or indeed anything other than the lesson plan." His conclusion, after the great surge of curricular and instructional change between 1957-1967: "things are much the same as they had been twenty years ago, and in some respects not as good as they were forty years ago."³

Consider, further, science curriculum reform which focused upon individuals, small group instruction and inquiry methods. In a national sample of high school science faculty, most science teachers reported in 1971 that they used teacher-centered methods such as lecture, discussion and demonstrations.⁴

Teachers in the 1960s wrote of their classroom experiences. When the angry judgments, especially of those who were identi-

² *Ibid.*, pp. 97, 63, 80, 82 91.

³ Charles Silberman, *Crisis in the Classroom* (New York: Random House, 1971) pp. 172, 159.

⁴ "A Survey of Science Teaching in Public Schools of the United States," Center for Science and Math Education, Ohio State University, 1971.

fied as "radical critics," are separated from the description of what their colleagues did daily with children, the dominant pattern of instruction where teachers talk and students listen emerges clearly.⁵ There were even some researchers who posed as students in order to see for themselves what happened in classrooms and hallways. In their description of what high school teachers did, the same pattern of students passively listening while teachers talked, row after row of chairs, assignments and recitation from the textbook and other familiar evidences of teacher-centered instruction prevailed.⁶

Students as well wrote of these years and their experiences in classrooms. They described the tedium, the authoritarian and mindless qualities of instruction, from their point of view. Harshly condemning, such writings stripped of anger and rhetoric also suggest the enduring patterns of teacher dominance in classrooms, reliance upon textbook and a chalkboard, little individualizing of learning, etc.⁷

Finally, there is an entire literature that has developed in the last two decades from careful classroom observation by specially trained staff. The notion of having someone sit in a class and record what both teachers and students say and do is not exactly novel, but it is nonetheless of recent vintage. Since what goes on in a classroom is incredibly complex — everything cannot be recorded even by a camera — researchers have focused upon certain categories such as classroom climate, non-verbal behavior, teacher-student communication, etc. As the literature has grown, observations have been collected from all types of classrooms in diverse

⁵ A sampling of the literature: Jonathan Kozol, *Death at an Early Age* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1967); Herbert Kohl, *36 Children* (New York: New American Library, 1967); James Herndon, *The Way It Spozed To Be* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1968).

⁶ Philip A. Cusick, *Inside High School* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973); Ellen Glanz, "What Are You Doing Here or Schooldays for the Teacher" (Washington: Council for Basic Education, 1979).

⁷ See John Birmingham, ed., *Our Time Is Now* (New York: Praeger, 1970); Larry Cuban, ed., *Youth as a Minority* (Washington: National Council for the Social Studies, 1972).

settings. A growing arsenal of varied instruments to record interplay between teacher and students has developed. Just a sampling from that literature in the 1960s is striking in its similarity. Ned Flanders, one of the more active and prolific investigators, summed up the current situation (1970) by saying: "Teachers usually tell pupils what to do, how to do it, when to start, when to stop, and how well they did whatever they did." Other studies, both large-scale and small, involving elementary through high school, urban and suburban, reach virtually the same conclusions, that classrooms are teacher-centered, group-oriented and textbook-bound.⁸ Moreover, other in-class observations show that the direction and level of questions is similar: teachers do most of the asking, and what they ask usually requires low-level recall and comprehension from students.⁹

None of this is to imply that student-centered classrooms or situations that realize the finest intentions of an earlier generation of pedagogical progressives do not exist. They do, but they seem to be in the minority and seldom show up in such studies. Nor is my intention to suggest that teacher-centered practices as described here are ineffective with students. My focus is on the perseverance of certain teacher practices over time, at various levels of schooling, in the face of sharp changes in the training of teachers, differences in children and persistent reform efforts.

While I have chosen a recent period to make this point, what evidence I have looked at for the years 1920-1940, when progressive ideology had captured professional enthusiasm, suggests a similar pattern of durable teacher-centered instruction in spite of progressive rhetoric about student-centered classrooms, grouping arrangements and other less teacher-centered methods.

⁸ Ned Flanders, *Analyzing Teaching Behavior* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Co., 1970), p. 14; see also Thomas L. Good and Jere Brophy, *Looking in Classrooms* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973); Philip Jackson, *Life in Classrooms* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968); Arno Bellack, et al. *The Language of the Classroom* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1966).

⁹ Seymour, Sarason, *The Culture of the School and the Problem of Change* (Boston: Allyn-Bacon, 1971); Flanders, pp. 13-14.

There is, I believe, sufficient evidence to conclude that teacher-centered instruction has endured wave after wave of reform efforts to alter teacher behavior in the classroom. The persistence, if not domination, of teacher-centered instruction raises the inevitable question of why. Why is this form of instruction so durable? Any answer to the question will raise substantial policy questions for decisionmakers in local districts and at the state and federal levels about what changes are possible in schools, particularly curricular and instructional innovations, and the content and scope of teacher education.

I do not have the answer yet, but I speculate that what makes teacher-centered instruction so enduring has mostly to do with traditions in teaching, who teachers are, the classroom as a workplace and what that space imposes upon the teacher, and the school as an organization. No doubt others may speculate quite differently. Speculate, sadly enough, is all we can do because so few historical maps of teacher practices in classrooms exist now. Until such historical maps are constructed out of what happened in classrooms, the very nature of teaching, the limits to school reform and the entire edifice of teacher-education will remain largely in the domain of guesswork — pretty much where it has been for the last century.



GEISHAS

*Geishas once used a face powder made out
of nightingale droppings that turned out to
be poisonous.*

Mornings, kimonos loosened,
they leaned out the window
to flirt with fishmongers,
inhale the heavy harbor smells.

They moved like human semaphores at night:
tilted wrist, green fan against the heart.
Black hair coiled around their heads'
white hives, they bowed, served tea,

until they felt a puckering
around the eyelids, tightness in the jaw.
Stinging led to migraine,
sometimes blindness.

Most moved to the mountains,
each alone in her hut.
In the snowy trees around them
the bird continued his song.

HELENA MINTON

The Questioning Process

Maximizing Its Potential

HILMAR WAGNER

(1) Teacher: Johnny, can you tell me the American president who worked so hard to establish the League of Nations?

Johnny: I don't know.

(2) Teacher: Who can help him out? (Pauses approximately 2 seconds to acknowledge Mary's raised hand.)

Mary: Woodrow Wilson.

(3) Teacher: What University did he serve as President? (Pauses again for approximately 2 seconds before acknowledging Mary's raised hand.)

Mary: Princeton University.

(4) Teacher: Now open your textbooks to p. 592 and find the answers to the questions at the end of the section entitled "The New Freedom."

There are at least nine teacher errors in the use of the questioning process shown in the dialogue given above. Read it again and see if you can find them.

In (1) the teacher calls a student's name before posing the question, thus causing the rest of the class to turn off the question. Ask question, then call on student. She also left Johnny hanging

out on a limb rather than giving him a cue or at least some consolation in the fact that he didn't know the answer. In (2) the teacher violated another premise in the questioning process. She asked, "Who can help him out?" In this case Johnny's self-concept is further deflated when attention is called to the fact that he needs help and Mary, the student who gives the right answer becomes the heroine. In (2) the teacher also failed to wait long enough to acknowledge Mary's raised hand. Depending on the ability of the class, the teacher should wait five to ten seconds to give even the slowest student time to think of a response. The teacher also failed to give some comment, such as a verbal reward, for Mary's correct response. In (3) the teacher again fails to wait long enough to give all enough time to think of a response and then calls on the same student, Mary, again, and in addition fails to acknowledge her correct response. The honor of responding to a question should be passed around. In (4) the objectives seem clear-cut. The students are to find answers to questions, which are likely low-order cognitive, at the end of the section. Questions such as the two posed and likely those at the end of the section don't normally require thought-processes; they simply entail memory.

Since the questioning process is so valuable toward student involvement in learning, teachers need to be effective practitioners in good questioning processes. To foster effective questioning processes requires a classroom atmosphere conducive to the process. By the teacher listening and accepting students' feelings, more responses to the questioning process will be encouraged. Students will listen more attentively and respond more enthusiastically when such an atmosphere prevails. Hunkins (1976) writes:

The question is an integral, if not the integral, component in processing information. Regardless of whether a teacher is functioning inductively or deductively with data, he or she needs to generate questions. And the questions that are created and the manner in which they are phrased and sequenced influence the quality, the significance, and the accuracy of the learner's conclusions and what is done with those conclusions.

This feeling is further reinforced by Carin and Sund (1971) with these statements:

A growing body of research exists which indicates that students attain higher levels of thinking when encouraged to develop skill in asking their own questions and when provided with more opportunities for dialogue with classmates about the questions posed and conclusions derived from information.

Just as we need to scratch when it itches, students who develop the ability to question information and think through responses, begin to develop the problem-solving ability necessary for them to pursue advanced scholastic and work opportunities.

The subject of questioning processes is so complex that one paper alone can only lightly touch on the issues. The purpose of this paper is to present five recommendations, some of which are mechanical in nature, which will aid the teacher in the questioning process.

(1) *Pass around the honor of responding.* Many students fail to become involved in the questioning process simply because another student beats them to the answer. Depending on the size of the class it is generally better to have students raise their hands when they wish to answer a question. This allows the teacher to control the flow of responses. Otherwise the sharper students will answer all of the questions while the slower ones are still thinking of a response.

If all students are of a similar level or if the class is small enough, the teacher may wish the type of spontaneity which comes from free response by anyone to a question and where the teacher does not control the flow of responding. However, there is some danger here of losing classroom control, especially by the inexperienced teacher.

The sharper students may become impatient when they don't get to answer as often as they like. The teacher in this instance tells such individuals that she knows they want to respond and that they likely know the answer, but that she is trying to give everyone a chance to respond. This is augmented by mentioning the

fact that there are twenty-four other students in the classroom and that she wants to hear from all of them.

A danger for the inexperienced teacher is to acknowledge the first raised hand, thus taking the teacher off the spot and passing the ball to a student. Also some inexperienced teachers acknowledge a raised hand being waved frantically in the middle of a discussion, which interrupts the flow of the conversation.

(2) *Reward responses.* When a student gives a correct response, the teacher may say something like, "Very good!", or "Great!", or "Beautiful", or "Right-on!", or "Neat!" The teacher should give some indication that she is pleased with the answer. The choice of words will be dependent on the class make-up and the teacher's own teaching style. Students can tell whether the reward is sincere or fake. Nothing will better evoke further responses from students than being rewarded by the teacher with a smile and a kind word. Generous praise will get better results than an unenthusiastic non-verbal recognition of the response or some non-personal remark which shows that the teacher is more interested in the response than the person who made it. Verbal rewards to student responses should be varied. Some teachers get in a rut and the students begin to notice that the word "Good" follows every correct response.

Many teachers do give verbal or non-verbal recognition of correct student responses, but they make serious errors when the student gives a wrong response. In most instances, unless the student is just showing off or giving a silly answer, there are no wrong answers if the student is trying. Some answers are much better than others. When a student does give a wrong response, the teacher should not say, "No! That's wrong." She should say something like, "Are you sure?" or "Think about that answer for a minute." Also when the question draws a wrong answer or a blank, the teacher can give the student a cue to help him get on the right track, such as, "Remember, we wrote that word on the chalkboard yesterday." Such a cue may just be the reminder the student needs. As cited in the example in the opening of this article, teachers should not say, "Who can help him out?" when

a student doesn't know the answer. This practice cuts down the student who doesn't know and builds up the student who helps him out.

Teachers are often in too much of a hurry in trying to get the answer as soon as possible, often at the expense of the slower student. By just lingering a few seconds longer rewards can be made, cues given, and even the question rephrased. However, the teacher should not put the student on the spot by staying with him too long when it is obvious that even with cues and rephrasing of the question he is not going to be able to respond. Here the teacher may simply say, "We'll come back to you later," and continue with the discussion. The teacher should sincerely try to come back to the student later in the discussion, perhaps with a question with a margin of success built in for the student to be able to respond correctly.

When a response is given softly the teacher should carefully choose words to encourage the student to give the response so that it can be heard, not cutting down the response by saying "Speak up! We can't hear you." The teacher should realize the value of the student response in this instance, since the student is likely shy about responding. Rewards, encouragement on a private basis, will likely cause some soft responses to increase in volume in the future.

(3) *Pause long enough for all students to think of a response.* This suggestion has been referred to earlier in the introduction and in the previous section. The teacher should pause five to ten seconds after each question is posed in order to give the slowest student a chance to think of a response. In the event the teacher sees puzzled looks on the faces of students after the question is posed, the question should be asked again or perhaps rephrased in more meaningful vocabulary. Timing in the acceptance of responses is as important in the classroom as it is on the stage. Thinking often arises when there is tension based on the question posed, that is, some question which needs to be resolved. The danger here is the teacher who doesn't give students enough time to think and acknowledges the first raised hand.

(4) *Ask the question, then call on student, not the reverse.* Too often teachers call a student's name before the question is posed, such as in the introductory example. When a student is called before the question is given, the rest of the students turn off the question, hoping they will not be called on. When the question is posed first, all students have to think of a response in the event they are called on.

This brings up the question of whether to call on a student who does not raise his hand. This is a delicate issue for the teacher to handle, for the student may be embarrassed when he doesn't know the response if called upon. Some teachers intentionally call on all students, regardless of who raise their hands. If students never try to answer a question, the teacher may be forced to call on a student to try to involve him. In this case, until the student has gotten used to responding, it might be wise to call on him when the question requires a relatively simple answer. When the student feels the success of giving a right answer and is praised for his response, he may likely raise his hand in the future and become more involved. In making such a decision the teacher should look not only at the student's academic growth, but should also consider his emotional and social growth. Which seems more important at that point in the student's development?

(5) *Ask challenging questions.* As cited in the introduction, too many teachers ask only low-order cognitive questions which require only memory to respond. In Bloom's (1956) taxonomy of objectives, knowledge-type objectives which require recall of specifics are at the lowest order in the taxonomic structure. Such questions as "When is Columbus Day?" or "What state grows the most lettuce?" require little thought on the part of the student. The questions in the introductory dialogue were strictly recall. Comprehension and evaluation type questions are at a higher order and need to become more common in the classroom.

Such questions which require analysis of the situation are more likely to create discussion in a classroom. The simple word "Why?" asked by the teacher after a given response will force students to think of a justification for the answers given. Samples

of higher-order questions are: "Are there other ways we could do this?" "What do you suppose would have happened if the Supreme Court had ruled otherwise?" One teacher trying this approach asked, "Would a stoic be able to commit suicide?" Her question was met with silence because the students did not know the meaning of the word "stoic." After "stoic" was defined there was a lengthy discussion, with many student responses, because it was a higher-order question which required personal opinions.

Many learned responses come from the mouths of students as they try to clear up fuzzy areas in their thinking. The good teacher will use the questioning process as one of her most valued teaching techniques. It is hoped that some of the suggestions made in this article will be of value in improving the classroom questioning process.

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HAIG TOWNSEND

A Caesar Salad

VINCENT PASCUCCI

It was a friend, if you can believe it, who suggested that I should write something about teaching methods; “strategies” they like to call it nowadays (“leading of armies”!). I wondered which of my language courses, Greek or Latin or Italian, would bear scrutiny. I have seen that bumper sticker, and it’s as true as any: “LATIN – THE BASIC LANGUAGE!” Let me say a bit, then, about Latin. Since this is better done in a particular context, I’ll talk about my own second-year Latin classes – I should not speak for colleagues – here at Phillips Academy, at a time when we have just celebrated our Bicentennial and are setting out afresh, full of hope and high oil prices, on a “Novus Ordo Seclorum,” “a New Series of Centuries.” That very encouraging quotation you may remember having seen on the dollar bill. There is not much else encouraging about the dollar just now.

I like to start *The Gallic War* in class, books closed, with only a wall map for the students’ attention. Pointing to the map as I proceed, I recite the substance of Caesar’s opening lines in a series of short Latin sentences: “Gallia est divisa; una pars . . . (hand movements on the map), alia pars . . . tertia pars; Gallia tres partes habet.” Sometimes I speak only in Latin, following up each statement or two with a simple Latin question that calls for a brief Latin answer: “Estne Gallia divisa?” – “Est divisa!” As in my modern-language classrooms, if the question is drawing a hesitant response, I give a correct and an incorrect answer for the student to choose: “Non est divisa / Est divisa.”

There are other times when I introduce *The Gallic War* with

short sentences but I call for a simultaneous translation: "Fortissimi sunt Belgae" — "The bravest are the Belgians." These Latin fragments are gradually combined until they reproduce Caesar's original long sentence. Actually, an extended and involuted Latin sentence, if broken into many short and easily understood Latin sentences, and then reconstituted gradually (the teacher proceeding only if students evidence comprehension), is likely to be more intelligible ultimately — and intelligible in Latin! — than an equally long and involuted English translation given by a student or by the instructor. This manner of explaining a passage is familiar in modern-language classrooms; classics teachers, generally, could well be more aware of the techniques of their modern-language colleagues. On a more advanced level, students and teachers can similarly paraphrase Latin and Greek poetry: "Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes" (I fear the Greeks even when they are bringing gifts): "Timeo Danaos. Danai sunt Graeci. Timeo Graecos. Danaos semper timeo. Etiam cum Danai ferunt (portant) dona ad me, Danaos timeo. Timeo Danaos etiam ferentes (cum ferunt) dona. Timeo Danaos et (etiam) dona ferentes." At least three purposes are served by this seemingly prolix periphrasis: students exercise themselves in prose composition (too often allowed to disappear in upper-level reading courses); they come to understand the passage directly, without intervening translation; they see and sense the differences between prose and poetry word order, syntax and vocabulary. For students who are reading *The Odyssey*, such periodic excursions keep them from forgetting Attic Greek while they are reading Homer's dialect.

Where reading is the main focus, it is especially helpful to start the next day's translation together, orally; no writing is allowed, for they are to puzzle it out again that night, trying to remember what went on in class. If the author is new, it is possible to guide the students through the stylistic idiosyncrasies: to demonstrate how they are to grapple with main clauses that are interrupted by subordinate clauses; to show how they are to keep alert to all the options of a Latin word or a nascent construction;

HELVETH . . . FERE COTIDIANIS PROELIIS CUM GERMANIS CONTENDUNT, CUM AUT SUIS FINIBUS EOS PROHIBENT, AUT IPSI IN EORUM FINIBUS BEL-LUM GERUNT: FERE, almost; COTIDIANIS PROELIIS could be which case? – dative plural – or what else? ablative plural – Fine, keep both options open. COTIDIANIS means “daily”; what do you French students call “the daily paper”? – *quotidien* – Right; and for “daily” the Italians say “*quotidiano*” and the Spanish say “*cotidiano*.” So, if it’s dative, we’ll say “to/for daily battles,” but if it’s ablative? – “by/with daily battles” – CUM GERMANIS? – with the Germans – Well, then, which is better: “to/for daily battles” or “by/with daily battles”? – by almost daily battles – All right. CONTENDUNT? – they struggle – Put it together! – They struggle by almost daily battles with the Germans. – “By” almost daily battles: improve on that. – *In* daily battles. – Good. Put it together. – They struggle with the Germans in almost daily battles. – CUM: If the next word is ablative, it may be a preposition meaning? – with – But we don’t have an ablative, so it probably means? – when/since/although – Keep all those options open. AUT? – or – Yes, but if you look ahead you see? – AUT . . . AUT . . . – That should ring a bell! – either . . . or . . . – Put it together! – when/since/although either . . . or . . . – SUIS FINIBUS: possibilities? – dative plural: to/for their own boundaries; ablative: by/with their own boundaries – Keep both options open. Look ahead: anything that takes a dative? – “prohibit” – Bah, you clown, you! We’ll have to wait. PROHIBENT? – they will prohibit – Is it future? Principal parts? – *prohibeo, prohibere* – Then it’s still second conjugation, the way it was when I was in the 10th grade! How do first and second conjugations form the future? – *bo, bis, bit, bimus, bitis, bunt* – Then this must be which tense? – present: they prohibit – What do you do when you “prohibit”? Don’t you prevent someone from doing something? – Yes. – Well, then, you *separate* them from their goal? – Yes. – And we said SUIS FINIBUS was dative or ablative. Throw in the idea of “separation.” – Ablative of Separation! – Good girl, Jane! Put it together. – when/since/although either they prohibit them from their own territory, or . . . – Pretty good. But CUM means

“since/although” only with? – subjunctive – Which we don’t have. So we’ll use? – *when* they prohibit – But that’s too vague. Who is prohibiting whom? – The Helvetians prohibit the Germans. – Yes, but “from their *own* territory”; that’s not very fair, is it? – No! The Helvetians prohibit the Germans from the *Helvetians’* territory! – Well, then, better leave out “own.” And “prohibit from”: let’s have that in clearer English. – They keep them out. – AUT IPSI? – or they themselves – Who? better be specific. – or the Helvetians themselves – IN EORUM: since when does “in” take genitive? – That’s not very sharp for a teacher! It’s *IN EORUM FINIBUS!* – Ah, yes! Well, I used to be sharper before I got involved with teaching kids! Put it together. – or they themselves in their territory – Whose? – the territory of the Germans – BELLUM GERUNT? – they wage war – All together now, from the beginning: “The Helvetians struggle with the Germans *in* (I drown out those who say “by” or “with”) almost daily battles, when either the Helvetians are keeping the Germans out of *their* territory, or when the Helvetians themselves wage war in the territory of the Germans.” Good! Remember: keep all options open; e.g., *SUIS FINIBUS* is dative or ablative until it turns out to be Ablative of Separation. AUT . . . AUT: watch for patterns, for parallel structure; don’t get so wrapped up in the next tree that you lose sight of the forest. And when you get stuck, ask yourself: “What’s going on?” Remember, this is not a translation exercise. It’s got to make complete sense. Caesar was a sharp fellow and he knew how to write. What did he do in his spare time while crossing the Alps? – “He played dice: ‘*Alea iacta est!*’” – No, that was later! He wrote a book about grammar, *De Analogia*; at Andover we would call it a *Competence Handbook*. Now, let’s read that passage aloud in Latin. Remember, to the Romans it made sense in Latin. Repeat after me, in the pauses, and let it ring out! It’s a beautiful sonorous language! “*Fere cotidianis proeliis/. . .*”

The assignment will be to write out at home the translation which we did together, and to try an additional few lines themselves. As the style gets more familiar, we prepare fewer lines together, while the lines they prepare on their own increase to ten, to fifteen, to twenty.

In class there are many ways of checking on the previous night's translation. First, however, it is reassuring to the students if they are given a few minutes to ask about troublesome words and syntax. The important thing is not that they get the right answer, but that they see the right procedure. Sometimes I'll ask someone who had success with the sentence to explain how it fits together. On the other hand, I may ask the questioner herself to start translating so that we can all see how the problem arose: "You made up your own mind that this word was ablative, you ignored the fact that it could be dative, and you forced it into the sentence — violent girl that you are! — even though it would not fit as an ablative! Don't close your mind and push! Find all the options, keep them all open until the sentence is finished. Remember the Latin sentence is called a "suspense" sentence; that means that it is "hanging" until the last moment; and you've got to be hanging also; the possibilities and meaning don't fall into place until you get to the end of the idea. And if everything does not fall into place at that moment, it may be because somewhere, too soon, you made a wrong assumption

Syntax must be a constant preoccupation: "Why is the verb subjunctive? What kind of dative is that?" We may focus on illuminating syntax items before or after translating the passage, or as part of the review of yesterday's passage. Sometimes we do it while students are asking questions about troublesome passages, questions which syntactical analysis can often best clarify. Or we tend to it in the very course of the translation, loath though we are to intrude on the story line or the flight of poetry; but better a quick clarification than a lingering misconception. The enrichment of the students' English vocabulary from the Latin words of the text can, likewise, be accomplished in passing, especially if the English will in turn help the students to remember the Latin word. Or else, a periodic run-through of derivatives can be enjoyed after the day's passage is completed, or when perusing again a review passage (we often reread in Latin, and sometimes retranslate the passage of the previous day). Strengthening the students' mastery of forms (verbs, nouns), always a recurring

need, can also be meaningfully done when a passage has been completed: "Let's go back to HORUM OMNIUM FORTISSIMI SUNT BELGAE; keep your eye on the bouncing verb and call out the answer: they used to be the bravest — erant — they will be — erunt —" etc. Syntax exercising is a natural extension: "Let's change the Latin: He says the Belgians are the bravest — dicit fortissimos esse Belgas — he says they were — dicit Belgas fuisse — he asks who are — rogat qui sint fortissimi . . ."

Students are astonished if you have the boldness to expect something more of the day's assigned passage than simply its translation. When a portion has been completed, I may have a volunteer or the entire class close the books: I give, in short tidbits, a fairly literal rendering in English, and they try to put it back into Latin; a twist of the hand indicates that the word order needs changing. Drawing both on recall and on their knowledge of grammar, they can often recreate the text. On a dull day, try asking them short questions in Latin. I still remember that Friday afternoon at Columbia when Dr. Householder, holding his text in one hand and rolling his own cigarette — paper + elusive tobacco — in his other hand, was exercising us on the day's Xenophon: "*Tis diabainei ton potamon?*" (Who crosses the river?). It was Sayres' turn. His answer was quick and confident: "*Ton potamon diabainei!*" (He crosses *the river*). He relaxed, and straightened his argyle socks. Unexpected shake of the head from Householder, and the original question repeated. "Ah," said Sayres with new understanding, "*Diabainei ton potamon*" (He *crosses* the river). Shake of the head, the unrecognizable cigarette hanging precariously from Householder's lips, and a mixture of Greek and English betraying his mounting exasperation: "*Tis*, Mr. Sayres, *Tis diabainei ton potamon?*" (Who? Who?). Sayres, his countenance lighting up with the conviction that Householder had now made the correct response perfectly obvious, boomed: "Ah, yes! *Tis diabainei ton potamon!*" Despite such risks, it is a superb exercise, challenging and gratifying to the students, for they enjoy the feeling that they are *using* the language. I say to them: "*Hi omnes inter se differunt*" (All these people are differ-

ent from one another). I then ask: "Differuntne inter se?" If the answer is slow in coming, I give two options: "Differunt / non differunt." The quicker students are swift to volunteer, but the others soon grasp the pattern and join in. It's demanding, it's enjoyable, it's a different way of reworking passages which have already been translated but now should be savored. Unlike bald review sessions, which merely grind the English equivalents into deeper grooves, the aftereffect of a question-and-answer exchange is a more intimate understanding of the text, for this understanding rests on Latin rather than English, and it leaves students with the Latin language ringing in their ears—its word order, its rhythm, its sonority. It remedies what Ben Gurion and others have touched upon as the palpably unsatisfying nature of confronting a translation rather than confronting the original language: it is like kissing a pretty woman—through a veil. A language teacher, after he has had to resort to English to establish meaning, should then return to the foreign language so that, in the end, the original language can itself impart the kiss of meaning, directly, the veil having been removed.

Similar results can be obtained from the exercise of memorizing Latin passages. Contrary to the belief of many teachers, the age-old charm of recitation from memory finds even today's students receptive. Granted, if you ask them whether they *want* to memorize a short paragraph, or if you assign it in a perfunctory manner, they are not going to greet the prospect with a cheer. But if you mouth it for them *alla Pavarotti*, and if you tell them that they will find it stirring because of the heavy syllables ("habere arbitrantur"), and because of the flow of liquids ("ut et minus late vagarentur"), and because of the pointed alliteration ("potiri posse sperant"), *then* they will commit it to memory diligently and will delight in proclaiming it to anyone who will listen. Memorization can also be done together in class: I read a line a couple of times aloud; I motion to the class to join in the reading; after the third or fourth reading, I look off into space and continue reciting; I raise my hand as an indication that anyone wanting to try this individually should raise a hand. One by

one they do it. We begin the next line the same way, and then do both lines together. In this cumulative way we master a sizeable passage in ten minutes or so. "Crescit eundo," it grows as it goes.

One may reasonably ask: "Why so much recitation of Latin when it is not a spoken language? Surely the interest of Latin resides in its content." Not so. Every language *speaks* for those who understand it. And while the utterances of Latin authors offer, in their content, what is remarkably cogent and of universal import, the full nature of great literature is well described by Alexander Pope's line: "What oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed." Now, while it is indeed possible, through English discussion, to identify and admire in isolation these exquisite modes of expression, yet, really to enjoy both the art and its content one must ultimately savor it all together, directly, in the words and tones of the writer — even if translation has necessarily preceded. In order to be able to do this in advanced levels of Latin study, in order to have the ear and taste for consummate prose and poetry, the ear and tongue must be trained to the beauties of the language from the first year of Latin study.

There are other reasons for speaking the language aloud. Sheer pleasure! For Latin is such a powerful- and rich-sounding language. And utility! For the learning of a language is accelerated and facilitated if speech and hearing come to the aid of reading and writing.

Everything that transpires in class is enveloped in the atmosphere which the teacher creates. There are superlative teachers who are predominantly grave, whose classrooms are sedate, whose results are remarkable. Most of my own finest teachers do not happen to have been like that. Mr. Humphries said to our high-school Spanish class one morning: "Vocab quiz scheduled, right? How many of you are going to get a hundred?" (Many hands. It was a good public high school.) "Well, if everyone is going to get a hundred, no need to waste time on a quiz!" He handed the gradebook to the girl in the first row: "Put down a hundred for everybody! Now that we've saved ten minutes, did I ever tell you about my ski trip at Dartmouth College?" For ten minutes

we were having the time of our lives in New Hampshire! When he dropped us back in Yonkers, New York, we plunged with new zest into radical-changing verbs, and we got more work done than we would have by starting ten minutes sooner. A change of pace is so invigorating that it makes, rather than loses, time. On rare occasions I tell my hard-worked students (an hour plus, per subject, per night): "No homework. Come back tomorrow rested and eager. Remember, the word 'student' is a Latin word that means 'eager'!"

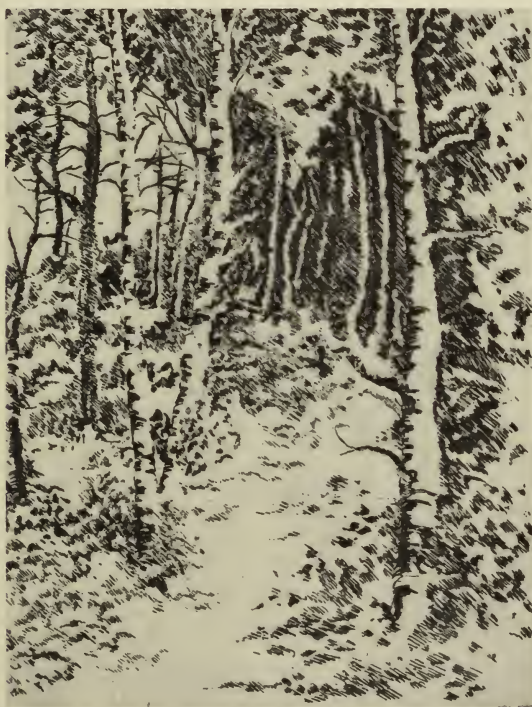
A good part of classroom atmosphere is enjoyment. I have a marvelous time learning, and I want the student to share my joy. Also, the teacher is the closest proof they have that this subject, these grinding details, this author, this poem are really worth their while. The teacher stands before them as product as well as purveyor. If *he* has gone through all of this, if *he* thinks it worth his energy to bring them through it, and if he strikes them as a happy, personable, sensible, well adjusted, honorable sort, then it may really be a worthwhile enterprise. When I come into Greek at 7:45 on a Saturday morning, these girls and boys, who may be understandably dubious about this time of day and this particular pastime, have got to see that this is where I *want* to be. I may arrive singing, vociferous, with a clap of the hands: Ah, hah! Caught you sleeping, eh? Where's that puddin' head senior...? Oops! Ah, you did make it! Gosh, aren't we all lucky? Think of all the kids in the U.S. who this very minute are tossing and turning in their beds like Achilles, restless, unable to sleep..." — "What! I wish I were still in bed!" — "Lisa! You are falling apart! I knew you when you were a studious 9th grader!" Or I may turn it around, but for the same purpose, to create a feeling of *Gemütlichkeit*: "By Hercules! I should have been a banker! My junior-high Yearbook quotes me as saying that I wanted to grow up and be a banker! How wise I was in those days! Do you realize that the banks serve coffee and donuts on Saturday morning?" Which reminds me of a costly gimmick of mine. It dates back to the days when a student could bolt from Pearson to Benner House and back in three minutes

flat, and pick up a batch of donuts at 5¢ each. I keep forgetting that they're 25¢ today! "Exam tomorrow, and I'll be away visiting the language program of another school. But you can write an exam on your honor, can't you? Incidentally, where in literature is the most marvelous speech on honor?" (Silence.) "That's a 'donut question'; for a donut, who knows the answer?" I should have been more careful. This happened to be an accelerated class in Italian for seniors. — "King Henry IV, Part I, Falstaff!" That Posey girl! I had only a \$5 bill, so Sarah suggested that all thirteen of us should have donuts . . . \$3.25! Oh, well! At least they know now that Shakespeare is valuable, even in an Italian class.

Finally, it's good to habituate youngsters to the demands and challenges of scholarly life, in this particular subject and in as many other subjects as the teacher can bring before them in pertinent but brief digressions. I tell them about the young Schliemann and urge them to do as well. "The Etruscan language has yet to be cracked. One of the longer pieces of Etruscan writing is an Egyptian mummy-wrapping. You like mummies, don't you? Get to it after Law School!" One day Dave muttered about "*est . . . enunutiata*": "Why did Caesar separate the verb that way?" — "To wake up you sleepy Andover kids! Be grateful that it has happened only once thus far. Do you realize how the German verb operates?" I wrote on the board a German sentence with separable prefix and put an eye-catching translation below it: "The train *rives* at 4 o'clock *ar*." They opened their eyes. Some of them opened their notebooks and jotted it down.

Yes, "*ars longa est*." And the work is endless too. But when I feel overworked, I think of Professor Highet: his classes at Columbia, department chairmanship, evening lectures on the New Times radio station, Board of Judges of the Book of the Month Club, professional articles and books! One day I told him after class that I was finding sight translation difficult. He should have told me to go to the library for a Loeb edition (Latin + English) and practice regularly. Instead, he asked me if I had any free time. When I managed to find a free hour, he told me to

come see him once a week at that hour. I did. He would select a passage of Latin, and when I had written a translation he would lay aside what he was doing and would correct my translation with me. From teachers like Householder, Hadas, and Highet we have received a noble tradition. This tradition we must try to sustain.



TRACY FARES

SHYNESS

All the animals
yearned to be shy.

For when they undressed themselves
there was nothing there.

Difficulties, however, abounded everywhere
Like hanks of wet leather around the neck.

Paralyzed with fear,
they were less aware. But acted.

If I stay where I am, they thought,
eventually I shall disappear.

The animals wanted to stimulate their shyness.
A secret source of grand pleasure.

CLOSENESS

Worm and plant; bird and tree;
man and man.

Bug and fruit; fish and sea;
amoebae.

All were close: hugging, digging,
eating. Breathing.

The shepherd declared:
Like air and water,

we interpenetrate and free up
all that we know

in order to be close.
Importance is concentrated in touch.

The truth approaches
with parched lips; we caress

the dryness, feel moisture
burst forth in a primal kiss.

RICHARD GROSSMAN

Foreseeding: Glues to the Future

MARK N. ANGNEY

The sight of the above definition of foreshadowing which appeared on a student's test paper could easily have elicited from me a call for the mobilization of legions of testers and tutors, but it didn't. Why should it? Hadn't that sophomore — even with his obvious problems with spelling and phonics — caught more poetically the quintessence of that literary device, that blend of foresight and action and coherency than did any of the correct spellers who were only parroting the standard definition? Yes . . . so I did nothing corrective, not even circle the words.

If I had taken action, on one front all the ordnance of remediation available today in the large public school system assuredly would have rumbled predictably into position, and on another front the lad himself would have marshaled his dim understanding of the red circles, but all that time he would inevitably still be in my class, still be under my care, and still be with all the other students who were, in a sense, just as much in need of remediation. It is this much less obvious yet so much more important remediation — that to repair the ravages wreaked upon our students by the electronic media environment — which classroom teachers, regardless of level or field or school, must address.

Neil Postman in his most recent book *Teaching as a Conserving Activity* (Delacorte Press/New York: \$9.95) meticulously details the ways in which the modern information environment (what he labels the First Curriculum) “unreadies” students for school (what he calls the Second Curriculum). Postman states that the First Curriculum, with television as its tenured master teacher,

takes neither vacations nor snow days as it instructs American youth in the lessons of disjointed narration, present-time orientation, simplistic problem solving, conceptual passivity and constant titillation.

The Second Curriculum, on the other hand, attempts "to make students aware of the origins and growth of knowledge and knowledge systems, history, the scientific mode of thinking, the arts, religion, and the continuity of the human enterprise." He argues that against the heat of the First Curriculum educators should act as thermostats: they should conserve tradition when the environment is innovative, or innovate when the rest of society is tradition-bound. "We know very well how to change, but we have lost the arts of preservation. Without at least a reminiscence of continuity and tradition, without a place to stand from which to observe change, without a counter argument to the overwhelming tides of change, we can easily be swept away — in fact, are being swept away." He believes that teachers as Second Curriculum coordinators, therefore, must provide what is most relevant because it is what the First Curriculum coordinators least provide: a coherence in studies, a sense of purpose, of meaning and of inter-connectedness among subjects.

Professor Postman's implication that every teacher is, in effect, part language teacher and part history teacher and part science teacher, and that as such should present all subjects as stages in humanity's historical development, is certainly not new, but his call in the second half of his book for media education is more novel. Media education is not celluloid seasoning sprinkled on a traditional curriculum; it is the investigation of media as "a form of information (dissemination) that both reflects and creates the prevailing way of life." Many post-secondary schools around the country presently maintain courses and even departments in media education as Professor Postman defines it, but, in these times of tight budgets and "back-to-basics" ballyhoo, following his exhortation to establish at the secondary level such curricular direction is a bit more difficult. Although he does see a proliferation of "thermostatic activity" as the most effective method to

bolster the Second Curriculum, he believes another principal method should certainly be the knowledge and personality of the classroom teacher. It is in this statement that secondary educators can take hope. They must examine closely some of the strategies for the classroom he only cursorily mentions to “foreseedo” improvements in the Second Curriculum, improvements which will be “glues to the future” for the students who must live in the First Curriculum.

What are the major characteristics of the world the First Curriculum depicts and therefore trains students to recognize and value? First of all, the First Curriculum paints the world as obvious and single-dimensioned. Each lesson in its curriculum (read: popular magazine and/or television show) has only one story line, exists only in the present, presents in predictably ordered time and spatial units a simplistic solution to a complex problem, uses facts and technical expertise and definitive answers as panaceas, centers on entertaining razzle-dazzle, and glorifies banality and mediocrity. Consider two examples: Isn't *People Magazine* a pictorial paean to hip personalities who are right now soaring from obscurity to stardom because of a fluke accomplishment in some other media field? Isn't every local television news show really ground-up news/weather/sports spiced with statistics, -ometer readings and scores served up as thirty-second savory sausage links at breakfast, lunch and dinner by smiling clones?

Because the Second Curriculum cannot eradicate the First, it must recognize it, use it and teach at first those same skills it fosters. One of the ends of the First Curriculum is to encourage a sense of simple narrative chronology, and therefore Second Curriculum instruction should also start with narration. Recount the plot of a novel, relate the events of an era, proceed through a laboratory experiment step by step, stress the sequence of adding ingredients to a recipe, chalk through an algebra problem. As the First Curriculum encourages simplistic responses, so too should a teacher, at least at first, accept sophomoric analyses. Macbeth was ambitious, there are five reasons why the Confederacy lost the

Civil War, Latin verbs go at the end of the sentence, pi equals 3.1416. Since the First Curriculum titillates emotions and entertains, by all means catch initial attention by that same technique. Run the introductory movie, relate the personal anecdote, crack the rehearsed joke, festoon the classroom with plants and posters.

Even teachers of only minimal competence do at least some of these things, for each is undeniably an affective and effective technique with which to engage students. Good teachers must not stop there, however, for if they do, they are mere orderlies to the witch-doctors of the First Curriculum. To the ills of their students good teachers must apply strategies that are curative, not merely cosmetic.

A teacher affects students even before he or she faces a single one in the classroom, for the self-image one holds toward him or herself as an educator determines the instructional practices he or she will carry out in the classroom. One very common self-image is that of justificationist — the teacher is one who has the answer or interpretation or method and who consequently focuses all lessons toward the justification of the correctness of it. Students of the justificationist receive only what the First Curriculum teaches: ordered, definitive answers which they should learn and passively accept. Much more effective is the fallibilist — the teacher who believes that the one thing he or she does *not* possess is the answer and consequently forms poses and leads them in the pursuit of flaws, inconsistencies and weaknesses in hypotheses. The students of the fallibilist encounter alternatives, not definitives; means, not ends; emulation, not mimicry; activity, not passivity; in short, thought processes missing in the First Curriculum.

The fallibilist teacher should foster the attitude that all education is movement toward perfection with such statements as "Here's an adequate definition of Transcendentalism; improve upon it by citing from works you have read." or "You got the idea across with that translation, but how could you express yourself more precisely?" or "That experiment worked, but this one didn't; where did you go wrong?" The popular shibboleth "I'm

OK, you're OK — here's why." is no longer relevant in education. Preferable is the fallibilist exhortation for constructive remediation: "I'm OK, you're OK — but let's improve."

Such a pre-class belief in the thermostatic function of education against the mediocrity generated by the media information environment demands from the teacher a similar countervalency in personal manner and demeanor in the classroom. The stronger the student tendency to use slang, dialect and profanity in class, the greater the responsibility on the teacher to speak and write correct standard English. The greater the student propensity for tardiness, early dismissal, neglect of deadlines and other similar abuses of time structure the greater the need for punctuality by the teacher in convening and dismissing classes and in returning papers promptly. The more sober a class, the more it is in need of pinches of humour; the more jocular, the more in need of cinches of seriousness. The teacher, like a defensive lineman going against the blocking pressure of the offensive guard, should in classroom manner move against the flow of the play called by the media environment and sent into the classroom. Classroom chaos expands proportionately to the toleration of it, and consequently the teacher who "studentizes" him or herself, that is, who does not set him or herself apart from (and above) students in such things as the use of language, in the adherence to time requirements, in decorum, and yes, even in dress, is in effect fomenting chaos in his or her own classroom.

Most students who reach the secondary level of the Second Curriculum do so because they have mastered at least minimally the content of the First Curriculum: narration, simplistic response, emotive sensibility and present-time orientation. The content of the secondary school class, therefore, must go beyond these skills. What the student is used to seeing only as narrative, for example, must be shown to be symbolic and metaphorical as well. Any teacher can use *The Catcher in the Rye* as an entertaining story of a boy who runs away from school, bums around New York City, and finally admits he's having a nervous breakdown and goes home. A competent teacher will also certainly delineate

Holden's problems, discuss the major steps of his idealistic search for their solution and analyze his half-truce with reality at novel's end. The teacher of symbolism and metaphor, however, will transcend these rudimentary approaches and lead students to see the book as no First Curriculum lesson could — as the pitiful diary of the autochthonous voice of American idealism trailing off while the realities of modern impersonality and materialism bellow ever more loudly. The biology teacher should, of course, begin physiology study with basic identification of body structures (narration), progress through the functions and interrelations among them and finally continue to transcend these two traditional levels of study to see the symbolic/metaphorical role of Man in the environmental web of all living things. The physical education teacher should move from instruction in individual athletic skills (narration), through the rules of the games themselves, to the strategies of playing them to see them as symbols and metaphors for competition, psychology and human nature. All subject area material is really Second Curriculum material, which is really life material; a directed emphasis on the study of symbol and metaphor in any subject can lead students to an understanding of this truth.

To teach students to question and not just simplistically to respond should be a second aspect of learning upon which a teacher should focus. Whereas teachers must initially accept the glib and facile answers with which students will surely accost them, they must bring those students to realize that such mouthing is really only a calisthenic for the more strenuous exercise of questioning to begin soon thereafter. Answers gush from every media orifice, and only by fashioning such queries as "Is this answer relevant?" and "Is this answer accurately reported?" and "Is any information being omitted?" and "Does this answer conflict with other information I have?" can students learn to hold sieves up to the fountain of answers available to them and see what they catch.

With the aid of the teacher, the student must then shape more precise questions to refine even more the answers caught in the first wide-meshed sieves and assemble the evidence into a hypoth-

esis. This hypothesis will, of course, be shown by the fallibilist teacher to be flawed, but more questions will follow and lead the hypothesis toward perfection. The educator is the one who whispers "Why?" to the definitive "Because" of the First Curriculum.

Because American students see only today around them, a third content goal of any teacher must be to present vistas over other centuries. A student recently marveled to me that, gee, those thin gold-edged pages of old Bibles sure made great rolling papers, but when I suggested that she could at least reciprocate by copying out the ancient history of the Judeo-Christian world on ten thousand Zig-Zags, she just stared at me. Such acerbic irony certainly cannot catapult students out of the present, but possibly writing hypothetical obituaries of historical personages can. Such obituaries can be excellent vehicles by which students obsessed with immediate pleasure can do a little time travelling to another era — one trip they so desperately need. Reporting the life and death of Beowulf, for example, and composing eulogies to him to show the values and politics of the time as they might have been reported in the Anglo-Saxon *Times* can be an exercise in both historiography and creative writing. Composing the obituary of an anonymous peasant or an unknown soldier can evoke interpretations of issues and events much more insightful than will cranking through an expository report on the causes of the French Revolution or of the First World War.

Thus that ingenuous test-taking sophomore in penning his pithy "Foreseeding: glues to the future" was explaining foreshadowing not only in literature but also in education. He was unwittingly defining strategies for teaching in these times of all-pervasive information. Before entering a classroom, a teacher must "foresee" him or herself not as a defender of definitive answers but as a diagnostician of indefinite theories; while in the classroom, a teacher must "do" correctly all that such structures as language, time and social order demand; and in teaching any subject, the instructor should apply to students such "glues to the future" as an awareness of symbol and metaphor, an appreciation of questions and a sense of the flow of past centuries. Would that I had more students with the learning disabilities of that sophomore.



JOSEPHINE ISELIN

*POSSIBLE EXPLANATION
FOR THE MISUNDERSTANDING*

Somehow

after the words
floated from your lips,
before reaching my ears

they hung
suspended in space,
momentarily fluttered

and metamorphosed
into a monarch butterfly,

only to be caught by
a sudden gust of wind

and carried elsewhere

PETER PAYACK



JOHN OLCA Y

MARCH

and the fields are still white.
Under the skin of winter
green is pushing closer to the surface
like a lover about to be remembered.
Spring is ready in the air of March
like a prism waiting in the dark.

PAULA KWON

Reviews

Teaching as a Conserving Activity,
by Neil Postman (New York:
Delacorte Press, 1979).

Reviewed by ROBERT A. LLOYD

This is a lively book, the arguments of which range wide. Those who have read Postman's earlier book, *Teaching as a Subversive Activity* (written with Charles Weingartner), will find the style familiar: telegraphic, iconoclastic, brash. Postman's mind seems always to enjoy moving on to the next thought with but brief backward glances. The result is a logic more intuitive than reflective, one which leads the author to conclusions sometimes contradictory or unrelated. Twelve years later it is undeniably strange to hear Postman arguing for conformity to group purposes, respect for and fear of authority, the use of "standard" English, good manners and order in the classroom, and a dress code. Our schools should be elitist, he says. "I use the word 'elitist' here . . . to mean putting forward a conception of behavior and thought, and in particular language, that is deemed 'better than' what students usually feel most comfortable with." This is the same fellow who argued in 1967 that teachers should be limited to three declarative sentences per class and prevented from asking any questions they already knew the answers to; he made many similar antiauthoritarian proposals, including the suggestion that "all graffiti accumulated in the school toilets be reproduced on large paper and be hung in the

school halls." Postman describes this later book as "the vice-versa of that earlier book."

Just how seriously should we take this topsy-turvy writer? If we do accept the changes which have occurred, both in the world at large and within ourselves over the past decade, and find in Postman's metamorphosis enough of our own changes to forgive him his inconsistencies, what weight shall we give his current comments? Postman is an alarm-sounder, a finger-pointer, a naysayer. Show him an emperor, and he will show you a naked emperor. In the 1960s, his eye was on the faults of a hide-bound public school system. In the 1970s, he sees the school system as the only potential antidote to the pernicious effects of television, recorded music and movies on the mental habits of the young. Formerly the enemy of all sensible learning, in his view, school has now become — along with a conservative family approach to childrearing — our only best chance to counteract the media. In this decade of detente, Postman has made his with traditional schools.

An energetic organizer of information, Postman has read widely in the social sciences, and has skillfully analyzed and organized his researches. Beneath his rhetoric, which is fast-paced and hard-hitting, one is aware of a restless mind which surprises itself, amuses itself and enjoys its own quirks. No sooner do bumptious phrases like "education philosophy," "information environment" and "knowledge context" grate on the ear (as well as the mind), than along comes the suave Britishism of "an" historian (does one sing "an" hymn? undergo "an" hysterectomy?).

Syntactic complaints aside, Postman presents a strong indictment of the media. At considerable length and in detail he connects many aspects of the media with problems which surface in schools, assuming that the qualities of our experience of the media affect our perceptions of other situations. This connection is presented as a postulate rather than proven. I accept the postulate. On the average, between the ages of 5 and 18, each of our children watches 15,000 hours of television. "That is thirty per cent more time than he or she is engaged at school. . . . If we add

...the time occupied by radio and record listening, as well as movie-going, we come up with a figure very close to 20,000 hours of exposure to an electric medium curriculum (sic), almost double the amount of time spent in school." "A youngster will see approximately 675,000 commercials, at the rate of 1,000 per week." Without examining the niceties of logic or the nature of sociological truth, it would seem that such an enormous exposure during the time of one's life when one is most susceptible to influence must make a large difference.

The function of schools is to maintain a cultural equilibrium. In periods of rapid change, schools should focus on what we should hold on to. In periods of stagnation, schools should present alternatives to the *status quo*. Given the present "information environment," of which television is the prime component, schools should be operating in the first mode, resisting the influences of the media. What are these influences, what differences do they make, how should schools resist them?

In rough sum, Postman's analysis runs as follows: While schools rely on legal compulsion to gather their clientele, television relies on psychological compulsion. It catches and holds a child's attention. In its obsession with this method of maintaining an audience, television suppresses content in favor of creating a benign ambience in which the message depends, for effectiveness, on proximity and continuous excitement. Arguments are made by analogy — unique, concrete, unparaphraseable — narrative picture-stories which elicit an emotional, unreflective response. The viewer's powers of abstraction are lulled, ideas are presented in a way which makes them immune to refutation. One can dislike a program but has neither the means nor opportunity to disprove its assertions. The messages are largely moralistic and value-laden, presented in aphoristic, metaphorical garb; their persuasive power is aesthetic, quasi-religious. As one experiences television, nothing can be retarded, nothing can be developed, one cannot "fall behind." Deferred gratification is anathema, attendance is its own reward, satisfaction is immediate. There exists a sense neither of

future nor of past, nor of continuity between events. Neither preparation nor sustained concentration is needed. Paradoxically, television is both authoritarian and contemptuous of authority: authoritarian in that its information flows in one direction only, from tube to boob; contemptuous of authority as it attacks the traditional, hierarchical structures maintained by the written word.

In the chapter entitled "Teachings of the Media Curriculum," Postman examines in greater depth some of the patterns of perception and thought he feels are encouraged by the experience of television. Much of the writing is speculative, and one can take exception to details, yet the whole is forceful. The arguments and issues remind one of the arguments and issues surrounding the nuclear power industry. The television industry is large, wealthy and, via the tube, intimately involved with the operations of most households. This enormous influence calls for a counterinfluence, a resistance to the one-sidedness of a situation which is systematic and intentional. Here is where Postman says the schools should step in. Unlike television, "the school curriculum is subject-matter-centered, word-centered, reason-centered, future-centered, hierarchical, secular, socializing, segmented, and coherent." Postman quotes early McLuhan: "Just as we now try to control atom-bomb fallout, so we will one day try to control media fallout. Education will become recognized as civil defense against media fallout."

The remainder of the book is an elaboration of ways in which schools and teachers might organize such a defense. On the way, Postman disposes of the "Technical Thesis" (that all educational problems are quantifiable and amenable to mindless solution) and the "Utopian Thesis" (that schools can educate all students in everything they will ever need to know). The discussion of technicalization is vintage counterculture, but when he grouches about the comprehensive schools, Postman seems to yearn for the good old days B.C. (before Conant). This nostalgia comes to full flower with his proposal for the "ascent of humanity curriculum," by which students shall be reminded of "humanity's creativeness

in trying to conquer loneliness, ignorance, and disorder." This curriculum

does not require that we invent new subjects or discard old ones. The structure of the subject-matter curriculum which presently exists in most schools is entirely usable. . . . It is a theme which can begin in the earliest grades and extend through college in ever-deepening and widening dimensions. Better still, it provides students with a point of view from which to understand the meaning of subjects, for each subject can be seen as a battleground of sorts, an area in which fierce intellectual struggle has taken place and continues to take place. Each idea within a subject marks the place where someone fell and someone rose. Thus, the ascent of humanity is an optimistic story, not without its miseries but dominated by astonishing and repeated victories. From this point of view, the curriculum itself may be seen as a celebration of human intelligence and creativity, not as a meaningless collection of diploma or college requirements.

But best of all, the theme of the ascent of humanity provides us with a nontechnical, noncommercial definition of education. It is a definition drawn from an honorable humanistic tradition and reflects a concept of the purposes of academic life that goes counter to the biases of the technocrats, the utopians, and the media.

Although Postman speaks scornfully of the back to basics movement and presents, in his discussion of language education, a complex description of the means and goals of teaching writing and speaking in the schools, his is a backward-looking perspective. The skills he would like to see taught and the assumptions on which he bases his selection seem solid, useful and more than simply traditional. His arguments for a "civilized" classroom sound stuffy, but I think this is only because they are too general. More specifically, he argues that individuals (teachers and students) should treat each other with respect.

Postman's heart seems in the right place. He has chosen the right things to write about. It is encouraging that much of what he discusses seems already to be happening, if only in small ways.

One could mention various curricular changes that have occurred (including Harvard's "core"), but I would cite as more important the differences one feels in teaching. I remember the urge, ten years ago, to shake my students by the shoulders and remind them that I was not a TV set — so much did they treat me as one. They walked into the room as casually as changing channels, tuned me out when I was not entertaining and gave me hardly a thought when out of the room. Indeed, thinking was to be avoided. This no longer seems the case, and in our increased mutual respect, my students and I seem to have a better time. Perhaps these changes would have occurred without Postman's polemics, but it is reassuring and helpful to have one's perceptions confirmed and enlarged. This book does that.

BIOGRAPHY

Any one will do
Give us simply
Something live
In front of us
Held up to view
Let us lose us
In the story
We will know then
When we're through
What might have been —
So true, how true,
Oh what we miss!
Other lives
Like those and
Not like this

NAOMI MYRVAAGNES

Fifteen Thousand Hours: Secondary Schools and Their Effect on Children, by Michael Rutter, Barbara Maughan, Peter Mortimore, Janet Ouston, with Alan Smith.
(London: Open Books, 1979)

Reviewed by PHYLLIS W. POWELL

The following item appeared in the January 7, 1980 issue of *Education USA*:

NYC TO DUPLICATE FACTORS OF
SUCCESSFUL SCHOOLS

The New York City schools have begun a pilot program to see if student achievement can be improved by recreating characteristics of successful schools at ones where student performance is lagging. The program is based on research by Ronald Edmonds, assistant to the chancellor, and others who found five conditions present in successful urban schools: a strong principal; clear academic goals; a well-defined testing program; a clean, secure environment; and high expectations for students.

Since Michael Rutter's *Fifteen Thousand Hours* was not available in this country until August, 1979, it is not clear whether his research could have stimulated Edmonds', but what is reassuring is that once again it is respectable to think that schools "make a difference." For this is an idea cast into disrepute by James Coleman's (1966) report on *Equality of Educational Opportunity* and Christopher Jencks' (1972) *Inequality: A Reassessment of the Effect of Family and Schooling in America*. As Coleman's summary reports: "...it appears that differences between schools account for only a small fraction of difference in pupil achievement." Though all that the Coleman and Jencks studies proved was

that massive influxes of federal monies to public schools could not eradicate social inequality, many political and educational leaders concluded, with simple-minded naivete, that schools "make no difference." It is to be hoped that the pendulum will not now swing to the other extreme, that schools "make *all* the difference," because that burden cannot be borne by any one part of a child's experience.

Fifteen Thousand Hours takes its title from the number of hours the British child spends in primary and secondary school. Dr. Michael Rutter is Professor of Child Psychiatry, and his colleagues research workers at the University of London. Rutter and team in 1970 conducted a study of all 10-year-old primary school students in an inner London borough, testing their intellectual level, behavior and family backgrounds. Twenty-seven hundred of these same children then became the subjects of an eight-year study which covered their secondary school years. Coleman in his 1966 study had admitted that only a longitudinal study which measured children's attainments on entry to secondary school could determine the effect of such schools on them. Rutter's group has performed such a study and at the same time, in contrast to Coleman's and Jencks' studies, has measured skills, values and attitudes specifically taught and learned in school.

It would take a skilled researcher or child psychiatrist — which I am not — to evaluate the authenticity of Dr. Rutter's methods. But it is worthy of note that Children's Hospital in Boston, Massachusetts, highlighted Dr. Rutter as guest speaker at its June, 1979, review of the most significant research on children of the last ten years.

Rutter found that his twelve secondary schools differed markedly in the in-school behavior, attendance pattern, academic achievements and delinquency of their pupils. Nor could the differences be traced to the behavioral or academic profiles of the pupils upon entrance. For example, of the pupils entering two secondary schools in the study approximately the same percentage had already shown behavioral difficulties: in school A — 30.8%, in school B — 34.0%. Yet four years later the percentage of chil-

dren with behavioral difficulties in school A had dropped to 9.2%, while in school B it had climbed to 48%. The positive and negative influences on behavior would seem to lie within the secondary schools themselves.

Rutter and his colleagues identified seven positive influences on the behavior and academic achievement of secondary school children: 1) a generous and consistent reward system, 2) a pleasant physical and emotional environment, 3) ample opportunities for children to take responsibility, 4) emphasis on academic matters and high academic expectations, 5) good teacher models of behavior and values, 6) skilled classroom teaching, and 7) effective staff organization. Where these components were in evidence, children achieved more and behaved better.

Yet the most significant of Rutter's findings was that the combined effect of the positive influences in a school "was much more powerful than that of any individual factor considered on its own." Rutter suggests that it is valuable to think of schools in terms of their characteristics as social organizations, that is, in terms of what he calls their "ethos." Social organizations, he says, set up their own standards of behavior, values and rules. Those who participate in the organization are keenly aware of the governing ethos and either "go along" with it or feel anxiety if they do not.

How does Rutter's list of positive influences compare with that which New York City plans to use as a guideline in boosting the success rate of its schools? The Edmonds list quoted at the beginning of this review is more startling for what it omits than for what it includes. The only human being on the list is the "strong principal" who, it seems, must set goals, design a testing program, clean up and police the grounds and expect a lot of the students! Obviously, Edmonds must assume a staff of teachers, but they do not seem to play any role in the success of schools. Perhaps the reasons for this curious lacuna can be inferred from the items printed in the column of *Education USA* adjacent to Edmonds' list.

Cleveland teachers defied a back-to-work court order, but

were to vote Thursday on a new contract offer to end the 11-week strike. The union wants a 27% raise over two years. In Cincinnati, a 37% raise over 30 months was agreed to before a strike deadline.

Chicago schools opened after the holidays with reduced services and cut-offs of some food. But they may close this week. The district faced a second payless payday last Friday, and teachers said they would no longer work if they were not paid.

Teachers in Cleveland and Chicago hardly have a school to call their own, let alone one in which they are apt to work together to create a favorable ethos.

But even were salary anxieties to be allayed somehow (obviously impossible in our inflation-ridden world), the best London secondary schools in Rutter's study would provide a "hard act to follow." I quote the study: "The 'atmosphere' of any particular school will be greatly influenced by the degree to which it functions as a coherent whole, with agreed ways of doing things which are consistent throughout the school and which have the general support of all staff." "Attendance was better and delinquency less frequent in schools where courses were planned jointly." "It appeared that an efficient system within which teachers worked harmoniously towards agreed goals was conducive to both good morale and effective teaching."

It would seem logical that schools should be places of shared governance, since the concern of all the adults in the enterprise is that children learn and grow. But there are factors militating against such governance. Two of the most subtle but real, in my opinion, are the time-honored tradition of academic freedom, usually interpreted as the right of a teacher to "do his own thing" in his own classroom, and, especially at the secondary level, the division of knowledge into academic disciplines. A less innocent barrier to cooperative goal-setting is the "union" mentality in the schools. Stretching far beyond those school systems which are officially unionized, it says that teachers are teachers and administrators are administrators, and the twain have nothing in common. The polarity has certainly been strengthened by the failure of

some of our largest cities to provide adequate support for their school systems.

Last of the barriers to a cooperative ethos is the assumption that students are the objects of education, rather than partners in the process. Such an attitude leads ultimately to an adversarial atmosphere: "I dare you to teach me something!"

There are no easy answers to these problems. Teachers must be free in their classrooms to respond to the needs of the moment; the division of knowledge into disciplines is at least tidy; any group which has more power is apt to be resented by those with less: administrators by teachers, teachers by students. And students after all are the forced receivers of instruction at the secondary level. The key to success as a school lies in the area of agreed-upon goals. Edmonds is undoubtedly right to place a "strong principal" at the head of his list because the goal-setting process will be initiated at the top. But Rutter makes clear that the process must extend to all constituencies in the school, including the students. Deciding upon an acceptable set of norms does not imply uniformity of behavior. According to Rutter, "the greater the group agreement on crucial issues the greater the tolerance which is possible for individuality and idiosyncrasy on other matters."

The New York City experiment, with its odd list of success factors, is doomed on another count — its diagnostic process.

Each [school] will be assigned a 'project liaison' who will determine which of the five factors are missing. The liaison will present a 'picture' of the school to a committee which will come up with a written plan for meeting the five standards.

There is only one group which can both diagnose the weaknesses in a school and overcome them by weaving together a new whole greater than the sum of the parts, and that is the individual school community. The school that is willing to undertake a self study, using *Fifteen Thousand Hours* as a starting point, has a good chance of emerging from the process stronger and healthier. An outside committee may diagnose, but cannot heal, for the school must be ready for the healing process.

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